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THE LITANY

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A

MANUAL OF THE LITANY:

WITH

QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

BY

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P R E F A C E.

IN composing the following pages, the writer has had mainly a threefold object in view.

First, he wished to give his readers a short sketch of the history of the use of Litanies in the Church,* in order that they might have a clearer idea of the origin and purpose of this particular office.

Second, he wished to explain to them the general plan according to which the Litany is arranged, as well as the meaning of the clauses composing it in detail. It will be found a great help to devotion, if not only the import of the words of any office in detail, but also the structure of the office as a whole, is clearly before the view of those who offer it.

Third, he wished to show how fully every part of the office may be illustrated from Holy

* This point has been treated more cursorily, because the Author had lately published a fuller account of the Litany in his "*Litany of the English Church.*" Pickering.

Scripture; so that the worshippers may feel that they are all along breathing up to heaven prayers and aspirations in entire accord with the spirit of the Word of God.

In doing this, the writer conceives that he has only been trying to meet a very real and urgent need. Nothing has more strongly and painfully forced itself upon his notice, than the almost complete ignorance of the meaning—to say nothing of the history—of our offices, which prevails among a large number of those who are professedly members of our English Church. The result is, that our services are often engaged in in a mere mechanical way. And, when any wake up to a greater reality of spiritual life, they are easily won over to services which seem to them to have a fervour which is lacking in our own.

There is consequently no duty more incumbent on those who are in positions of any influence, than that they should gain for themselves, and then impart to others as fully as they can, a knowledge of the history, and plan, and meaning in detail, of the offices appointed for use in our English Church.

It is to aid them in this, that the writer has composed this work on the Litany, as he had before endeavoured to give an account of the

origin and import of the Services for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer.* He is well aware how imperfectly he has been able to carry out his design, in the midst of the distractions of parochial work. All he can feel is, that he has done what he could.

In composing the Book, he has availed himself of such aids as were within his reach. Chiefly he is indebted to a Manual of the Litany, bearing the initials of S. W., now out of print, with its excellent Scriptural illustrations; to the condensed analysis of the Litany of the Rev. E. J. Boyce; to the simple, earnest Meditations on some points in the Litany of the Rev. J. Whitlock; to an old Exposition of the Litany to which no author is assigned; and to the two Commentaries on the Litany, both excellent in their respective ways, of Dean Comber, and Bishop Forbes.

And now he sends forth the Book with the desire and the prayer that it may tend to God's glory through the more intelligent and earnest use of this most tender and comprehensive office of our Church.

* "English Churchman's Companion to the House of Prayer." Skeffington.

MANUAL OF THE LITANY.



CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.—MEANING AND HISTORY OF THE LITANY.

THE word Litany is taken from the Greek word Litaneia, which derives the idea of *earnestness* from the first two letters Li, which contain the root.* And by a Litany was understood, in early times, a humble, earnest service of special supplication to God in time of distress. It mattered not whether the trouble was actually present, or whether it were only anticipated as likely to come. In either case, it was felt, those words, "Call upon Me in time of trouble, so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me" (Ps. l. 15), were at once a direction to call upon God specially under any pressure of calamity, and also an encouragement for hope of relief. And, indeed, amid the many troubles to which men were exposed, especially at the time of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, and the irruption of barbarian hordes, Litanies were the mainstay of the Christian Church. Nor were Litanies con-

* As seen, *e.g.* in the adverb '*lian*,' *very*.

fined to times of social and national trouble alone; they were used with reference to individual afflictions too. And they were offered up by individuals as well as by communities. Thus, it is related of the Emperor Constantine, that he was in the habit of retiring to his tent before a battle, in order to pour forth his litany to God, and obtain His help. And, shortly before his death, he visited the Church of the Martyrs at Helenopolis, and there remained for some time offering his supplications and litanies to God.

This part of the idea of a Litany, namely, that it is suited only or mainly for seasons of emergency, and that it is to be offered with a reference to some actually present or apprehended distress, is to some extent given up in these later times of the Church. The Litany is still a service of humble and earnest supplication to God, in which we beg of Him to turn away evil from us as far as may be. So that it is in fact an expansion of the petition, "Deliver us from evil," taught us by our Lord Himself. But then, we consider that such a service is fitting *at all times*. We know not what dangers or trials may be hanging over us, and what any hour may bring forth. Some "little cloud, like a man's hand," on the horizon of our national, or domestic, or personal life, may soon extend itself, and our bright peace be exchanged for darkness and storm. And, if any particular body of worshippers be happily exempt from trouble, yet they cannot tell what afflictions may be befalling other Christian communities, whose cause they are bound, as Christians, to make their own.

And, although the Church now is happily free from those great troubles by which it was beset in earlier days, yet we are expressly told that "in the last days perilous times shall come";* so that we know not what afflictions may be coming upon the Church, or how far they may be averted or mitigated through our earnest prayers.

Another peculiar feature of the Litany service is the particular form assumed both in the responses of the people, and in the prayers themselves. For the cry of the people is not "Amen"; but "O Lord, hear us," "O Christ, hear us," "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord," "Good Lord, deliver us," or words to that effect, in which the congregation carry out and complete the supplication which the minister has begun, instead of expressing their acquiescence in it, and desire for its fulfilment, as is done by the people when they say "Amen" at the close of other prayers. Such responses on the part of the congregation were in use in very early times of the Church. Thus, in an ancient form, corresponding more or less to a Litany, of the Church of Malabar, the petitions are framed as follows:

Deacon: For the peace and unity and well-being
of the whole world, and of all Churches,

People: We beseech Thee, have mercy upon us.
[And so throughout.†]

* 2 Tim. iii. 1. See also 2 Pet. iii. 3; Jude, 18.

† The form in which the prayers of the Litany are conveyed, according to which the minister precepts or repeats the beginning of each prayer, which the people conclude, or respond to, is plainly derived from Oriental models.

The supplications offered up by the minister, to which these responses are made on the part of the people, also differ from those generally employed, in this, that they consist usually of a series of short petitions, instead of being full and continuous, like the Collects, and other prayers. This feature was even more marked in the earlier Litanies, where each clause consisted commonly of only a few words. A change was made in this respect by our reformers, who blended several short clauses into one, as well as arranged the members of the new clause methodically, and translated all into the English tongue.

One other characteristic of the Litany service is this, that it is addressed almost entirely to our Lord, the Second Person in the Holy Trinity, throughout. For though He is, in the mystery of the Holy Trinity, One with the Father and the Holy Spirit, yet we look to Him in a special way as the guardian of the Church in its militant state, exposed to constant danger, subjected to various troubles, here on earth. For He has deigned to take our nature upon Him, and

From the earliest period such forms appear to have prevailed in the East; and we find them not merely in the Litanies, but in the Liturgies, and all the other offices of the Oriental Churches. In the Western Churches such forms do not seem to have prevailed till a much later period; and we may therefore very fairly conclude that, when the word *Litany* was imported from the east to the west, and when the Kyrie Eleison, which formed the commencement of the Eastern litanies, was likewise conveyed to the West, the form of the Oriental prayers, and great part of their substance, accompanied them. — PALMER, *Origines Liturgicæ*, i. 281.

knows our weaknesses, afflictions, and trials, and watches with most constant and tender care, as the good Shepherd, over the Church which He has purchased to Himself with His own blood. And to Him, therefore, in the Litany, we specially address our prayers.

It was usual, also, in earlier times, for the Litany to be accompanied by a Procession ; inso-much that a " Litany " and a " Procession " were often used as equivalent terms. In some cases the Litany was offered during the procession ; in others, several companies of worshippers would proceed from different churches, singing hymns and anthems on their way, and then meet at some one church, where the Litany would be offered up. But abuses arose with regard to these processions, and they were made occasions of display ; in consequence of which it was thought better, at the time of the Reformation, that they should be given up.

The use of special earnest supplications to God, with reference to troubles actually present, or feared as likely to come, was customary in very early times. It arose out of the natural instinct which impels man to fly to God for succour in time of need. Thus the 51st Psalm has been called " David's Litany." In the 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel, is given that prophet's earnest prayer to God. And in the 2nd chapter of the Book of Joel, is the record of a form of prayer for public use, in a season of national distress. In the times of the early Church, S. Cyprian (A.D. 250) says that they continually made prayers and supplications for the repelling

of enemies, for rain, for the removing and moderation of calamities. And S. Chrysostom (A.D. 390) speaks of the whole city meeting together, and with one common voice making their Litany or supplication to God. Thus, by the fifth century, the use of public Litanies in times of trouble may be said to have become a very general custom in the Church.

It may give a more definite idea of the way in which Litanies were employed in early times, if one or two instances are given of their use.

Thus, about 450 years after Christ, great troubles fell upon Vienne, a city of Gaul lying in the valley of the Rhone; frequent earthquakes being added to other causes of distress. And, as the climax of all, a terrible fire broke out in the palace within the city, when the people were assembled at Church for service on Easter Eve. While others fled from the Church in alarm, the Bishop Mamertus, remaining at his post, and continuing in earnest prayer to God for help, formed the resolution of offering a solemn public Litany service to God. And the result was so good, in the alleviation of the troubles by which the city was distressed, that some neighbouring districts adopted the same means for obtaining God's succour. And the custom spread more and more widely; till the use of Litanies became (in Hooker's words) "the strength and stay of God's Church in those troubled times."

Another instance of the early use of Litanies, and one of a somewhat different kind, was that of Augustine and his companions, about the year 600 A.D. They had come over to England as

missionaries from Rome, by the direction of Pope Gregory the great, who had been led (according to the well-known tradition) by the sight of some English slaves in the market-place at Rome, with their fair complexion, and their light golden hair, to form the design of visiting in person Britain, where the Church had fallen into a very miserable state. They had been allowed by King Ethelbert—who had married a Christian named Bertha, and was thus, so far, favourably disposed towards Christianity—to land upon the isle of Thanet, and to come into his presence, in order that they might declare before him the truths which they preached; the express stipulation, however, being made, that the interview should take place in the open air, from a fear lest the king should be acted upon by any magic spell. Accordingly, the missionaries approached the appointed place with the slow and solemn pomp of a religious procession. Before them was borne a silver cross and a portrait of Christ, while they sang their Litany in which “they offered their prayers to the Lord for the eternal salvation both of themselves and of those to whom they came” (Bede, Book I. ch. xxv.). Arrived in the king’s presence, they went on to preach to him the Word of Life, and “told” (according to an old Saxon Chronicle) “how the mild-hearted Healer of mankind, by His own throes of suffering, set free this guilty middle earth, and opened to believing men, the door of heaven.” And when they had succeeded in making a favourable impression upon the king, and gained permission

from him to take up their abode in the city of Canterbury, they again set forth in procession; and as they drew near to the city they chanted, as their Litany, words taken from the 9th chapter of the Book of Daniel: "We beseech Thee, O Lord, in all Thy mercy, that Thy wrath and anger may be turned away from this city and from this holy place; for we have sinned. Hallelujah!"

Such was the manner in which, under special circumstances of anxiety or joy, a Litany was used in earlier times.

The Litany service, in the first instance, was adopted on occasions of existing emergency. Such, no doubt, are specially fitting times for its use. And in this respect it is akin, according to its original design, to those "Prayers on several occasions," which we possess now. Mamertus, who has been referred to before, selected the three days preceding that of the Ascension of our Lord as the most appropriate season for offering a special Litany service. Thence, as it is thought, the custom arose in Gaul of offering the Litany generally on those days. And from Gaul, probably, the custom was introduced in quite early times into the English Church. And to this day we preserve the name of the "Rogation Days," as the title of the three days before Holy Thursday, the day of our Lord's Ascension, although the custom of celebrating then a "Litany" or "Rogation" (which is the Latin form of the word) is given up. At Rome, on the other hand, the great day for offering the Litany with special pomp was April 25th, S. Mark's day.

But in course of time it was felt that the Litany was a service which well deserved to be far more frequently used. And, accordingly, it was first ordered to be offered once in every month. And then, in the times of the Reformation, the direction was given that it should be used three times in every week; on Sunday, as the day of special service, when the largest body of worshippers would be gathered at the Church on the day of the Lord's Resurrection from the dead; and also on Wednesday and Friday, the first as the day of the Lord's betrayal by Judas, and the other as that on which He suffered death upon the cross for man.

The rubric of our Prayer Book directs that it may be also used at other times according to the direction of the Ordinary. And in this way a general authority is given for the adoption of the Litany service on various occasions, as, *e.g.* at confirmations, or during Lent, a season for which it is specially suited, and at which, accordingly, it was frequently used in earlier times.

As to the connection of the Litany with other offices, it should be noticed that, as it was first brought out at the order of King Henry VIIIth, in 1544, in the English tongue, it was published as a separate office, capable of being used alone.*

* It is observed by Mr. Plummer, in his remarks upon the Book of Common Prayer, that the Injunctions with regard to the Litany of Queen Elizabeth's reign, show that this view of the Litany, as suitable to form an independent service, was still retained at that time. It was Archbishop Grindal's direction that there should not be any pause between the Morning Service, the Litany, and the Com-

But when the English Prayer Book was issued in 1549, it was placed at the end of the Communion Office, and the direction was given that it should be used before the Communion Office in the Injunctions of the time. In this way, it was clearly connected with the Communion Service in the mind of those by whom our Book of Common Prayer was framed. Indeed, there is a propriety in using it thus, and offering to our Lord our supplication for all who are in danger and trouble, when we draw near to Him in thankful commemoration of His death. And similar forms of prayer were usual in the Liturgies (or Communion offices) of the early Eastern Church. From its position in our Prayer Book, it has come to be regarded, perhaps, rather as an adjunct to the Daily Service among ourselves. A clause in the "Act of Uniformity Amendment Act," issued in 1872, supplies a need which had been long felt, and authorises a greater freedom with regard to the use of the Litany. And it may now, under proper sanction, be used as a separate office, or in conjunction with other offices. And, when used with other offices, it may either precede or follow. And it is allowable to unite it with the daily Evening Service as well as with the daily Morning Service, with which alone it was customary to join it before.

Our present Litany is derived by a process partly of growth and development, partly of munion Office, he thinks, which led to the idea of a connection between the Litany and the office for daily Morning Prayer in the minds of the people at large.

modification and improvement, from the Litanies of the early days of the Church. Short and simple Litanies are extant, belonging to the early centuries, especially those of the Ambrosian Service of the Church of Milan.* Then, there are two much fuller Latin Litanies, one of the Anglo-Saxon, and one of the (as Dr. Lingard thinks) Armorican or Welsh Church, to which the dates of about 800-900, and 650-700 are assigned. There is also a complete *English* Litany in a Primer of about 1410. These would probably be in the minds of our reformers when they, Cranmer especially, remoulded the Litany, and brought it into its present shape. But they would use chiefly, as the basis of their work, the Litany as it then existed according to the varying "uses" of Sarum, Hereford, Bangor, York, &c., and the Reformed Litanies which Luther and Hermann had already put forth. And at times they would go back apparently to the Forms of Prayer somewhat similar to the Litany which are found in most of the very early Liturgies of the Eastern Church. And thus the reformers framed our present excellent Litany, correcting what seemed erroneous, rejecting what was superfluous, moulding clauses which were before disjointed into one, introducing an admirable arrangement throughout, and translating the whole as a first instalment of public service in English "into our native English tongue."

* Two specimens of these are given in the author's *Litany of the English Church*, pp. 166, 167.

CHAP. I.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.*

1. What is meant by a Litany Service, as distinguished from other forms of Prayer?
2. What are the peculiar features of a Litany in reference to the form of the petitions and the responses in it, and to the Person to whom it is addressed?
3. In what respects was the mode of offering the Litany in ancient times different from that in use now?
4. What historical notices are there of the use of Litanies in the earliest times of the Christian Church?
5. Give a short account of the use of a Litany by Mamertus in Gaul, and Augustine in England?
6. On what occasions was the Litany offered in ancient times? Trace the history of the change with respect to the times at which the Litany is to be offered which has been gradually introduced.
7. Show how the Litany may be used, either as an independent service, or in conjunction with other offices.
8. Give a sketch of the manner in which our present Litany was framed.

* NOTE.—The questions at the end of the chapters are not meant for examination merely. They are intended also to mark the main lines of thought touched on, which those who will may pursue more fully for themselves.



CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCTION (CONTINUED).—THE GENERAL PLAN OF THE LITANY, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH IT IS TO BE OFFERED.

As there is a general plan underlying the service of daily Morning and Evening Prayer, and the office for the Holy Communion, so there is also in the Litany a very definite, though a different plan.

In a broad and general way, it is divisible into two great parts, the Lord's Prayer being placed at the junction point of the two halves, gathering up all that has preceded, and preparing the mind for what is to come. Of these two parts, the first exhibits most strictly those characteristics of a Litany which were noticed before; the second part corresponding more, either to the short responsive sentences, or *preces*, as they were called, which were common in early forms of prayer, or to the usual, and fuller, Collects and Prayers. The first part is found to a certain extent, as it is at present, in the early Litanies which have come down to our time. The second part is understood to have been added at a somewhat later time, to meet the troubles by which the Church was oppressed.

The first of these two great portions, again, consists very markedly of four distinct parts; these parts being named, for distinction's sake,

the *Invocations*, the *Deprecations*, the *Obsecrations*, and the *Supplications*, respectively. By the “*Invocations*” here are meant the addresses to the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, first separately, and then conjointly, with which the Litany begins. The “*Deprecations*” are the clauses next following, in which we pray that evils may be by God’s mercy averted from us, if they have not already come, or that they may be removed from us, in God’s good time, if we are already suffering from them in fact. The “*Obsecrations*” (as they are technically called, from the Latin word “*Obsecro*,” I beseech) are the three clauses in which we implore the Saviour’s help, pleading the great essential features of His life on earth for us, and marking those seasons at which we specially need and desire His aid; these clauses being fitly introduced between the preceding and the following classes of prayers. The “*Supplications*” is the name which belongs to that longest section, in which we pray for the gift of certain blessings, as we prayed for the removal of certain evils before. And the larger part of these *Supplications* is intercessory, *i.e.* the worshippers pray in them for blessings for others rather than for themselves; and therefore the name of “*Intercessions*” belongs to them. In a few cases only the petitions have reference to the worshippers themselves; *e.g.* “That it may please Thee to give *us* an heart,” &c.; “That it may please Thee to give *us* true repentance.”

The *Invocations*, which come first, are an expansion of the shorter words with which the

earlier Litanies opened: "Lord, have mercy; Christ, have mercy; Lord, hear us;" or words to that effect. In them we first call upon each of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity separately, and then upon All together in their union in the Godhead; by which we are reminded that we are really making our prayer in the Litany to All the Three Persons, although we are specially calling upon our Lord Jesus Christ. And throughout we address each Person as "God," thus making open profession of our true belief in the Being of Him to whom we look for help. And we make our prayer in reliance on God's "mercy," as our only ground and plea. And we confess that we are "miserable sinners," who are "worthily punished for our offences," and deserve only chastisement at God's hand.

The Deprecations, or petitions that evil may be averted or removed, are arranged upon a definite plan. A general cry to God for mercy, formed on the model of the prayer given in the prophet Joel, stands first. And this is followed by a prayer for deliverance from all evil and mischief, that is, from moral and spiritual guilt and its consequences; or (as the remainder of the clause gives it more fully) from sin, arising from the fraud or force of the Devil, and leading to God's anger here, and to everlasting condemnation in the world to come. The next two clauses mention, in a more detailed way, some of the special forms which sin assumes, in reference to the inward spirit of evil, and the outward acts to which it leads, when stirred into energy by the influence of the world without, or the inclina-

tions of the flesh within, or the instigations of the Evil Spirit, the three "treacherous dealers" through whom man is constantly being misled. After this follows a clause detailing similarly some of the chief temporal visitations which fall upon men individually, and upon nations, as the consequences of sin, from which also we pray to be delivered by God. While the last clause desires immunity from those civil and religious disorders which follow very much as a judgment upon sin, and which bring in their train a disregard for God and for His Revealed Will.

The third part, the Obsecrations, or earnest cries to the Saviour and pleadings with Him, stand fitly between the prayers for deliverance from evil and those for the bestowal of what is good. Of the three clauses containing them, the first two plead those more prominent features in the Saviour's life which at once manifest forcibly His self-sacrificing love for man, and also have a special bearing severally upon corresponding features in our own spiritual lives. And the third clause dwells on those seasons or conditions of our life, those crises or special states of existence, at which our danger is greater than at other times, and with reference to which, therefore, the succour of the Saviour is to be specially implored.

The fourth and last element of this portion of the Litany is the Supplications, in which prayer is made first (according to the direction given to Timothy by S. Paul) for those in positions of authority in Church and State. Then, after the clauses referring to these, prayer is made for all

God's people, that is, for the Church everywhere, and for the world at large, that the nations may be preserved, as far as may be, in a state of peace. Then intercession is made for those various classes, one by one, who stand more specially in need of spiritual or temporal help. And with these Intercessions for others are intermingled Supplications for the worshippers themselves, that they may be blessed with fruitful seasons, and a supply for their temporal needs, and, still more, that they may be led to true repentance, and be endued with the grace of God's Holy Spirit, and be brought to real amendment of life, and live in the holy love and fear of God.

Here the petitions of this part of the Litany end. Then the cry rises shortly and importunately from minister and people alike, to our Lord, as the Son of God, the Lamb of God, the Christ, or Messiah, Anointed to be the Saviour of the world. And, with the Lord's Prayer, as summing up what has gone before, and preparing for what is to follow, preceded (as commonly) by the address to the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, "Lord, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Lord, have mercy upon us;" and followed by the ejaculatory prayer and its respond, beseeching God not to deal with us so as our sins have deserved, the Litany passes to its second part.

In this second portion, again, there are four parts which may be, to a certain extent, distinguished, though the distinction here is not so broadly marked as it was in the case of the

different parts of which the first portion was composed.

The first part consists of the Prayer beginning with the words, "O God, Merciful Father," and the sentences following, to the end of the Gloria. The Prayer here has as its general subject the request that those evils which are either actually present at any time, or which are threatening and being prepared by the subtle craft of the Devil or men, may, by God's good Providence, be "brought to nought," even as a threatening storm sometimes is "dispersed." And this deliverance is sought, not merely for the benefit of the worshippers themselves, but, still more, in order that they may thus be led to a deeper sense of God's goodness, and may more fervently praise Him.

The sentences following carry on the petition, by the request that God will "Arise," or "Awake" (according to the expression used frequently, especially in the Psalms), and manifest His power and His love by His succour; at the same time that they appeal to His past mercies as a ground of confidence that He will help His faithful servants similarly in the time to come. The Gloria with which this part concludes may be viewed as at once a Hymn of Praise for God's past mercies, and a prayer that His glory may be advanced more and more, as His fresh acts of goodness supply new themes for praise.

The second part is composed of a series of short sentences and responds, the chief parts of which were used in earlier ages in times of

war. But they accord excellently well with the general purpose of the Litany, and are suitable therefore for all times. For they are fervent requests on the part of minister and people alike, that God will look mercifully upon the sorrows of their hearts, and the afflictions by which they are distressed, and forgive their sins, and hear and answer their prayers for aid.

Then the third part consists of a single prayer, similar to that in the first part of this second portion of the Litany. But there is this difference; that in the prayer here the request is rather that evils arising out of the *frailty of our nature* may not be permitted to fall upon us, even though they have been justly deserved; whereas in the earlier prayer it was rather that such evils as are impending, if not present, *from without*, may be removed. And the additional request is here introduced that, whatever troubles God may see fit to permit to fall upon us, we may never give up our sure trust in His mercy and love, or cease to maintain our purity and holiness, and to make His glory the great end of our lives.

And now the Litany concludes, in the fourth part, with the Prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Benedictory Prayer. Of these, the first pleads the Saviour's gracious promise to be with those—the two or three—who are met together for prayer in His Name, and to grant their requests. And it beseeches Him to fulfil this His promise for those who have now united in prayer to Him, while it thanks Him for affording this opportunity of united supplication before the throne

of God. The Benedictory Prayer, taken from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chapter xiii, verse 14, was added to the Litany in Queen Elizabeth's time, 1559. And it fitly closes the Litany with an earnest request on the part of the minister that there may rest upon all the congregation the Blessing of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, with an address to whom the Litany had begun.

Before concluding this chapter, it must be remarked, as to the *manner in which* the Litany is to be offered, that it may be either "sung or said" according to the Rubric prefixed. No particular *place* is specified as that in which the Litany is to be sung or said.* But whether it is offered in any distinct place or not, it is at least well to mark by some slight pause, before passing on to the Litany, or in some other way, that it is a distinct office from that for daily Morning and Evening Prayer. The point, however, which is of most real importance is, that it is to be offered with the utmost humility and earnestness of heart, in view of the great goodness of the Saviour, on the one hand, and, on the other, of the great and manifold dangers to which His Church is exposed. And it is, therefore, to be offered by all, as far as possible, *kneeling*; that posture of the body representing the true attitude of the spirit, and reminding us,

* The history relating to this point has been given by the Author in his *Litany of the English Church*, ch. v. The various injunctions issued from time to time on this subject will be found collected in *Hierurgia Anglicana*, p. 72.

if we wander from it any time, of what should be our frame of mind in offering the Litany throughout.

CHAP. II.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Give the general plan of the Litany, showing the two main portions into which it is divisible.
 2. Give the parts of which the first portion is composed, with the name of each part and the meaning of it.
 3. Explain shortly the plan of the
 - (a) Invocations.
 - (b) Deprecations.
 - (c) Obsecrations.
 - (d) Supplications.
 4. On what ground is the Lord's Prayer, with the sentences preceding and following it, introduced at the end of this portion of the Litany?
 5. Mention the parts of which the second portion of the Litany is composed.
 6. Give a short account of these parts one by one.
 7. State the manner in which the Litany is to be offered up.
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CHAPTER III.

THE INVOCATIONS.

THE Litany, as we have it now, opens with four clauses, consisting of Invocations, or Addresses to the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, first separately, and then combined. Each clause is at once of the nature of a profession of faith, a confession of unworthiness, and a prayer for forgiveness and grace. For in each clause we declare our Belief in the Divine Being of Those whom we address, and in what is revealed to us as to Their relation to One Another, and to mankind. In each, again, there is an acknowledgment of the sins of which we have been guilty, and the miserable state into which we have been brought through them; this clause having been introduced into our Litany in accordance with the spirit of penitential humility which breathes in our Book of Common Prayer throughout. And in each clause there is also a prayer for mercy, for the exercise of that compassionate love of God towards those who do not deserve His favour, which pardons man's transgressions, and extends to him protection and help.*

And in this all is thoroughly Scriptural throughout. For in praying to God *for mercy*, we fitly adopt the words of the Psalmist (li. 1.)—

* On the force of the words “mercy” and “miserable sinners” here, see the excellent remarks of the Rev. J. A. Whitlock, *Readings on the Litany*, pp. 16, 17. (Christian Knowledge Society.)

“Have mercy upon me, O Lord.” And the blind, the lepers, the afflicted, in the Gospel, are all represented as crying “Have mercy” to our Lord (S. Matt. xx. 30, xv. 22; S. Luke xvii. 13). And we acknowledge ourselves to be *sinner*s, in the language of the Publican, who smote upon his breast, saying, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner” (S. Luke xviii. 13); with hope at the same time drawn from such words as “who-so confesseth his sins and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Prov. xxviii. 13). And, once more, we plead the *miserable* state, both bodily and spiritual, into which we are brought through sin, according to the words of S. Paul: “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. vii. 24.)

It will be observed that every clause here is repeated by the people throughout, and not said by the minister only, with a short respond following on the people’s part. For the profession of faith in God, and the confession of sin committed against Him, are such distinctively personal acts, that it is felt to be right that these clauses should be said by *all*, in the same way as all unite in offering the General Confession and the Creed.

O God the Father, of Heaven, have mercy, &c.

O God the Father, of Heaven, have mercy, &c.

In this first clause, the First Person in the Holy Trinity, God the Father, is addressed; of Whom it is said in the Athanasian Creed, that “The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.” He is addressed first by us, in accordance with what we believe to be revealed

to us in Holy Scripture, as to the "eminency and priority" of God the Father, among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, to use Bishop Pearson's words: It is "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" that we are directed to be baptized (S. Matt. xxviii. 19), and we follow this order, therefore, in declaring our belief, and offering our prayer.

And we address Him as God *the Father*, specially in that He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; as S. Paul writes (2 Cor. i. 3) "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort." But we think of Him at the same time as also the loving Father of mankind, who has created us at the first; who preserves us from hour to hour, and watches over us with most loving care; and who now has spiritually adopted us as His Own children, in that we are redeemed by His Son, and sanctified by the Holy Spirit from Him. Thus it is said in the book of Deuteronomy, "Is not He thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath not He made thee, and established thee?" (xxxii. 6). "Behold," says S. John, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God" (1 S. John iii. 1); as he had said before, "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (S. John i. 12). And S. Paul writes that "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14).

And we address Him as the Father, *of Heaven*,

that our minds may be duly raised and filled with the thought of the Glory and Majesty and Power of Him who dwelleth in Heaven, and from thence pours down His blessings upon mankind. So we are taught by our Lord Himself to pray "Our Father, which art in Heaven." So it is said in the Prophet Isaiah (lxvi. 1) : "Thus saith the Lord, the Heaven is My Throne." And in the twentieth Psalm it is said, "Now know I that the Lord helpeth His Anointed, and will hear him from His holy Heaven" (ver. 6). And again, it is written, "Hear Thou from Thy dwelling-place, even from Heaven" (2 Chron. vi. 21).

There are some *sins* which may be regarded as specially sins against God the Father, such as forgetfulness of His Holy Presence and His mercies ; murmuring against Him in time of trouble ; presumption and self-confidence in time of success and prosperity ; distrust of His Providence ; ill-treatment of His creatures ; neglect or abuse of the gifts, the time, strength, health, means, influence, which we have received from Him ; and for these sins specially we should ask pardon from Him.

There are also some *miseries* into which we have been brought through sin, and for relief from which we may more particularly look to Him. "This being an invocation of the Father," writes Dean Comber, "to whom the works of creation and providence do belong, let us, while we beg mercy from Him, first reflect upon our miseries, which He is most concerned to help us in. Are we sick or weak in body, low and impoverished in estate, abused in our good

name, or unhappy in our relations? Is the air tempestuous, the year unseasonable, the State embroiled with war, or the Church disturbed by faction? Are we deprived of our peace or our traffic, our liberty or our rights? We may then justly go to our heavenly Father, the great Disposer of all things, and, in a sense of our misery, and His mercy, call upon Him for relief. And when we call upon Him for mercy, let us reflect upon the miseries of this kind which we labour under; so shall we the more earnestly beg His pity."

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, &c.

O God the Son, &c.

The second clause is an invocation of the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, whom we address, not as "The Son of God" ("Goddiss Sone," as it was in one of the early English Litanies),* but as "God, the Son." By which expression is marked more emphatically a twofold truth in our belief respecting Him.

For, first, we believe that He is "*Very God*," as it is expressed in the Athanasian Creed, "equal to the Father as touching His Godhead," "God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world." For so He has Himself taught us, saying, "I and the Father are One" (S. John x. 30). And S. Paul speaks of "looking for the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. ii. 13). And in his Epistle to the Romans he describes Him as "Christ who is over all, God blessed for ever" (ix. 5).

* Maskell, Mon. Rit. ii. 217.

But, also, we believe that He is the *Son of God*, “Very God of Very God,” in the words of the Nicene Creed. So S. Paul speaks of God as “sending His Own Son in the Flesh” (Rom. viii. 3). And at His Baptism a voice from Heaven expressly declared that “This is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (S. Matt. iii. 17). So that, in looking to Him, we are looking to One who is none other than God Himself, who yet, being the Eternal Son of God, gives us power to become the sons of God in Him, and deigns to call us His brethren, and enables us to call upon God as “Abba, Father,” Jews and Gentiles all alike, as being made sons of God, through the Love of the Father, in Him.

And we address Him also as the “*Redeemer of the world*”; for “we have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. i. 14), in that He “gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity” (Titus ii. 14).* And we say ‘Redeemer of the world,’ for there is no limit to the pardon and reconciliation freely offered to all in Him. “He is

* The word “Redeemer” (in Hebrew *goel*) is used first in Gen. xlviii. 16: “the Angel that redeemed me from all evil.” In the law, it was used of the near relative who had a right to reclaim forfeited property, or to purchase freedom for a bond-servant (Levit. xxv; Ruth iv). So it was used of God’s *claiming Israel as His own*, and bringing them as such out of Egypt, delivering them from bondage, and making them free (Exod. xv. 13; Pss. xix. 14, lxxvii. 15; Is. lxiii. 9). Hence it is applied to Christ in a higher spiritual sense in reference to His great Work of Love in reclaiming and restoring fallen man. See Kay, *Notes on the Psalms*, p. 64.

the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world ” (1 S. John ii. 2). He is “ the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ” (S. John i. 29). And “ as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God ” (i. 12).

In thus addressing the Saviour, we may well think of those *sins* which have been specially committed against Him, as our want of penitent, faithful, loving, acceptance of the Redemption which He has wrought for us, and of earnest endeavour to frame our lives according to His example and His will. Sometimes we have presumed upon our salvation ; at others we have despaired of His grace. We have been so little mindful of His favours ; so little thankful for His benefits ; so little affected by His agonies. And so we have crucified Him afresh, and made His death to be, for us, almost in vain.

And there are some *miseries* from which we may specially ask for deliverance from Him, such as the fear of God’s righteous punishment ; the difficulty we experience of turning to Him in true Repentance and Faith ; the bondage we are under to sin ; our loss of the peace of a good conscience, and of the happiness which there is in a life of loving obedience to God in Christ ; all which miseries are the consequences of our neglect of the Saviour in times past.

O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, &c.

O God the Holy Ghost, &c.

This third Invocation is addressed to the

Third Person in the Holy Trinity, the Holy Ghost. And we address Him also as "God," for the same attributes and works are assigned to Him in Holy Scripture as to the Father and the Son.* And He is joined with the Father and the Son in the Baptismal formula given by our Lord Himself, "Baptising them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (S. Matt. xxviii. 19). And similarly He is joined with Them in the benedictory Prayer of S. Paul: "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all, Amen" (2 Cor. xiii. 14.). And in the Acts of the Apostles, where it is said first, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost" (ver. 3), it is afterwards said, "thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God" (ver. 4.)

Further, He is addressed by us as *proceeding from the Father and the Son*. For so in Holy Scripture He is called the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son. "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (S. Matt. x. 20). "God hath sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Galat. iv. 6). And again He is said to be *sent from the Father*, "whom the Father will send"

* Barrow observes that "to the Holy Spirit are expressly attributed all the incommunicable perfections of God, the essential characters and properties of the Divine Nature." And then He goes on to show how Holiness, Eternity, Omnipresence, Omniscience, and the like, are all attributed to Him.—*Sermons on the Creed*, Sermon XXXIV.

(S. John xiv. 26); while yet He is also said to be *sent by the Son*, “whom I will send unto you from the Father” (xv. 26). From which we conclude that He is rightly said to proceed from the Father and the Son; though the exact expression “proceeding from” is used with reference to the Father alone in Holy Scripture, “Even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father” (S. John xv. 26).*

And it is important to view Him thus as “the Lord,” “who proceedeth from the Father and the Son;” for thus we are reminded emphatically that He whom we address is none other than the very Lord God; and that He, nevertheless, has come forth from the realms of Eternal Being to our world, to carry out the plan of Infinite Love of God the Father, and God the Son, for the creation, and redemption, and sanctification of mankind.

There are some *sins* and *miseries* which should be more particularly in our minds when we pray of God the Holy Ghost to “have mercy upon

* “Although it be nowhere expressly said, that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Son, as it is that He ‘proceedeth from the Father’ (S. John xv. 26), yet we have the same ground to believe the one as we have to believe the other; for as much as, to be the Spirit of the Son, is but another way of expressing His procession from Him, and the clearer of the two, in that it can admit of no dispute, as the other may. Which I therefore observe, because by this we may see, that although the Greek Church doth not agree with the Latin in the word, yet they do in the thing; they own the Spirit to be the Spirit of the Son as well as of the Father, which is the same thing in effect with what we mean by His procession.”—Bp. Beveridge, *Works*, ii. 510. Lond. 1824.

us, miserable sinners." For by rejecting His good motions within, by disregarding the Word given by Inspiration from Him, by rejecting the ordinances and means of grace, wherein He is present to help us, by defiling the body, which is his Temple, by being cold and inattentive in spirit, when He helps our infirmities and aids us in prayer,—in all such ways we specially grieve the Holy Spirit of God; and for such offences we should ask pardon from Him, lest He withdraw from us, and cease to strive with us, and to win us back to God and a better mind, on account of our continued perverseness and hardness of heart; as it is written, "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone" (Hos. iv. 17). And from these faults there come upon us ignorance respecting heavenly things, unruliness of affections, selfishness, and want of love for others, spiritual weakness, and disinclination towards devotion and obedience to God's will; from which evil states we pray to Him for relief, as we pray for pardon for the sins which have brought us to this sad condition.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, &c.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, &c.

Having addressed the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity separately, we now, in concluding the Invocations, call upon Them together as "Three Persons, and One God."* For They are

* "We have examples of such kind of addresses and prayers to the holy and blessed Trinity, as well in the writings of the orthodox Fathers, as in the public offices of the ancient Church. I shall only produce that memorable prayer of the Eastern Church, which begins some of their

“One” in essence, “One” in glory and majesty, “One” in Their purposes of love for mankind. So that we say in the Athanasian Creed, that “the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all One; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal.” “The Persons being separate” (as it has been truly said), “They must not be confounded; the Substance being One, It must not be divided.”

It is important that we should thus address the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity conjointly, in order that we may not only declare our belief in the great mystery of the most Holy Trinity, but also remind ourselves of the truth that “All the Godhead joins to make us whole;” that All combine in the Creation, the Redemption, the Sanctification of man, however separate functions in reference to man may be more particularly assigned to Each; and that, in addressing the Second Person of the Holy Trinity in the Litany for the most part, we are in reality looking up to All.

We use the terms “holy,” “blessed,” and “glorious,” in addressing the Holy Trinity. They are “*Holy*,” as All-Holy in Themselves, and the source of holiness to mankind. And so the Seraphim were heard by the Prophet Isaiah singing, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts” (vi. 3). And we address Them as “*Blessed* ;” for so S. Paul speaks of the “glo-

offices, and is thus expressed : ‘O most holy Trinity, have mercy upon us ; Lord, be merciful to our sins ; Saviour, pardon our transgressions ; Holy One, behold, and heal our infirmities, for Thy name’s sake.’”—DEAN COMBER.

rious Gospel of the Blessed God" (1 Tim. i. 11); and again, "Who is the Blessed and Only Potentate" (vi. 15). And we address God as "*Glorious*," for so the Seraphim sang, "the whole earth is full of His glory" (Is. vi. 3). And Moses long before had sung of Him, "Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exod. xv. 11.)

And we pray of All to "have mercy upon us, miserable sinners." For our sins committed against Each are committed against All. It is of the mercy of All that we are not consumed. It is to the mercy of All that we must look for relief in our miseries, and for forgiveness of our sins.

CHAP. III.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Give the three points which each clause of the Invocations contains. And show why the clauses are said both by minister and people.
2. To whom is the first clause addressed, and why?
3. Explain the force of the words "the Father," and "of Heaven"; and illustrate them from Holy Scripture.
4. What are the sins and miseries with reference to which we may especially ask God the Father for pardon and relief?
5. Explain the expressions, "O God," "the Son," "Redeemer of the world," in the second clause, and illustrate them from Holy Scripture one by one.
6. What are the sins and miseries with reference to which we may specially call upon God the Son?
7. Give the grounds from Holy Scripture on which we believe that the Holy Ghost is to be addressed as "God," and as "proceeding from the Father and the Son."

8. What are the sins and miseries with reference to which we specially call upon God the Holy Ghost?
9. What is the practical force of the expression "proceeding from the Father and the Son"?
10. Why do we address the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity together as well as separately, praying them to have mercy upon us, as miserable sinners?
11. Mention any passages of Scripture in which the terms "holy," "blessed," and "glorious" are applied to God.



CHAPTER IV.

THE DEPRECATIONS.

THE second part of the early portion of the Litany consists of deprecations, *i.e.*, of petitions against evil, that it may be either averted or removed, in contrast with petitions, which come further on, for the gift of that which is good. There is a regular order in these petitions, as was noticed before, and as will be seen more clearly when they are considered in detail.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, &c.

Spare us, good Lord.

This first clause is introductory to the whole, and was introduced here in 1544. It was previously used as a short anthem, and joined to the Penitential Psalms, which preceded the Litany. Before the other deprecatory clauses, in the Old Litanies, the short sentence, "Be favourable, spare us, O Lord," was frequently placed.

We pray of God, in this opening clause, *not to remember* our past sins, using very much the language of the Psalmist, "Remember not the sins and offences of my youth;" "O remember not our old sins, but have mercy upon us, and that soon" (Ps. xxv. 6, lxxix. 8). That is, we pray of Him to put them away from thought, and blot them out, and therefore *not to take vengeance upon us*, and punish us for them—which He cannot but do, so long as they stand against us—in accordance with His gracious promise, "Their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. viii. 12). As, on the other hand, we say, "Remember me, O my God, for good" (Nehem. xiii. 31), when we have been enabled to do any good thing by His grace.

And we pray of Him not only thus to put away from remembrance our own sins, but *the sins of our forefathers* also. "We have sinned *with our fathers*," the Psalmist wrote, "we have done amiss, and dealt wickedly" (Ps. cvi. 6). "Our fathers have sinned," Jeremiah exclaims, "and we have borne their iniquities" (Lam. v. 7). For the consequences of the iniquity of our forefathers may fall upon us, unless it be averted by God's mercy, upon our timely and sincere repentance. (See Ezek. xviii.) Our Lord declares that "All these things"—*i.e.* the punishment of all the former sins of the people—"shall come upon this generation" (S. Matt. xxiii. 36), so that it would be the penalty of accumulated guilt. And thus "the mass of human wickedness swells and increases year by year, calling down vengeance upon sinful nations."

And then we make our prayer more intense by taking up the language of the Prophet Joel, "*Spare Thy people, O Lord, and give not Thine heritage to reproach*" (ii. 17). And we beseech Him *not to be angry with us for ever*, not allowing His anger to burn like fire; so that, through His mercy, we may not be utterly consumed.* If He think fit to chasten us, we hope it may be only for a season, and in mercy, for our good; that so we may at least be delivered from eternal condemnation in the world to come.

And here again we plead the infinite love of Christ, and the merits of His all-prevailing sacrifice for our sins. "*Spare us whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious Blood.*" For we "*were not redeemed with corruptible things, but with the precious Blood of Christ*" (1 Pet. i. 18, 19). And what may we not hope for at the hands of Him who has given even Himself for us, and endured the shame and agony of the cross for our sakes? "*Though our sins be as scarlet,*" yet may they be made "*white as wool,*" pardoned and washed away for the truly penitent, through the one "*full, perfect, and sufficient*" atonement and satisfaction made for our sins by our Divine Lord.

From all evil, and mischief, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

After the general introductory clause, there follow five clauses which may be viewed as an expansion of what is briefly summed up in the

* Cf. Nehem. ix. 31. "*Nevertheless, for Thy great mercies' sake Thou didst not utterly consume them, nor forsake them; for Thou art a gracious and merciful God.*"

one petition, "Deliver us from evil," of the Lord's Prayer.

In the first clause we pray for deliverance in the most broad and general way. We ask first to be delivered *from all evil and mischief*, that is, from all inward, moral, and spiritual guilt, summed up as "evil"; and from all "mischief," that is, from all those failures, misadventures, derangements, which are the consequences entailed by spiritual evil in the world.* So the Psalmist prays, "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee" (Ps. xx. 1). And the promise is made to those who trust in the Lord that "There shall no evil befall" them, "neither shall any plague come nigh" their "dwelling" (Ps. xci. 10).

Then these words are explained more definitely as being equivalent to a prayer for deliverance from sin, and the consequences of sin; under which two heads all the forms of evil in the world may be summed up. For we go on to pray for deliverance *from sin*, as the Psalmist says, "Deliver me from all my transgressions"

* Mischief [from *meschef*, old French] is explained as "Ill consequence," in its second meaning.

"States call in foreigners to assist them against a common enemy; but the *mischief* was, these allies would never allow that the common enemy was subdued."—SWIFT. Johnson's *Dictionary*, by Todd.

In Richardson, "to *mischieve*" is explained to *cheve* or *achieve*, bring to an end, wrongly or injuriously. And in Latham's Dictionary the word *Bonchief* is given, with a quotation from the fifteenth century, as the opposite to *mischief*; but the word is now obsolete.

(Ps. xxxix. 8) ; and again, " Oh ! let not my heart be inclined to any evil thing " (Ps. cxli. 4).

And since the great source and fountain-head of sin is the instigation of the Evil One, we pray to be delivered from *the crafts and assaults of the Devil*. For sometimes he deceives us by " craft and subtilty," as he deceived our first parents, " through his subtilty " (2 Cor. xi. 3), putting fair shows on things, and hiding from us the true guilt of sin. While at other times he appears " as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour " (1 Pet. v. 8) ; *assaulting* us, as it were, and hurrying us, through violent passion, or great fear, or sudden surprise, into sin, which is the transgression of the Holy Law and the Will of God ; for " sin " (S. John writes, 1 Ep. iii. 4) " is the transgression of the Law."

And then we go on to pray that we may be rescued from the terrible consequences of sin, which is *God's wrath*, His righteous indignation against that abominable thing which He abhorreth. For " the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men " (Rom. i. 18) ; and " the face of the Lord is against them that do evil " (1 Pet. iii. 12.)

And as this wrath of God, yea, even this " wrath of the Lamb " (Rev. vi. 16), unless averted through penitential prayer, must issue in " eternal damnation " (S. Mark iii. 29),* " Everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord " (2 Thess. i. 9), we pray to Him who hath " delivered us from the wrath to come " (1 Thess. i. 10)—" Who delivered us from so

* Supposing αἰωνίου κρίσεως to be the true reading.

great a death, and doth deliver ; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us ” (2 Cor. i. 10), crying in earnest supplication to Him “ *from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us.* ” *

From all blindness of heart, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

In this clause are enumerated more particularly some of the specific forms which sin is apt to assume.

And, as the foundation and deep source of all, is set first that *blindness of heart*, which prevents our seeing clearly and habitually what God’s will is, and what we are in His sight, so that we do not discover and check our faults, and walk steadily along the way of God’s commandments, which leads to everlasting life. It is the judicial penalty of past sin, as it is said, “ They received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send upon them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie ” (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11). And again, “ having the understanding darkened . . . because of the blindness (or rather the *hardness*) of their heart ” (Eph. iv. 17—19). And it is the cause of our falling into deeper sin ; for “ if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness ” (S. Matt. vi. 23). And we pray therefore of God here, “ Open Thou mine

* “ Sin and death are woven together ; they are the outside and the inside of the cup ; you cannot take one and decline the other. . . . The wages of sin is death. From the nature of sin itself, you cannot divorce punishment from sin. ” —Archbishop Thomson, *Sermons at Lincoln’s Inn*, p. 214.

eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy Law" (Ps. cxix. 18).

Then we pray for deliverance from *pride*, *vain-glory*, and *hypocrisy*, three faults closely inter-linked. For pride is that state in which a man thinks too highly of himself above what he ought to think, despising others, and forgetting that he owes all he has to God; a state most dangerous, for "pride goeth before a fall;" and most displeasing to God, who "rejecteth the proud," and "plenteously rewardeth the proud doer." And it leads on to *vainglory*, an empty ostentation before men, and delight in their applause. It was in vainglory that Hezekiah displayed his treasures (2 Kings xx. 12—15), and that Herod accepted the people's impious praise (Acts xii. 21—23). And these lead on to *hypocrisy*. For high thoughts of self, and a desire for human praise, lead a man to make a show, and act a part, before men, professing to be what he is not, and concealing those faults which he really has. Our Lord specially warns men against it in the Sermon on the Mount (S. Matt. vi.); while He specially commends the graces which stand opposed to these faults, humility, and disinterestedness,* and sincerity of heart.

* It has been observed that the quality for which Moses was renowned, which is expressed in our version of the Bible by the word "*meekness*," should be rather "*disinterestedness*," the spirit of self-oblivion, as contrasted with that of self-seeking, which latter lies at the root of vain-glory and pride.—See *Essays on the Pentateuch*, by the Dean of Ely. p. 177; Dean Stanley, Art. "Moses," in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible*; *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, First Series, p. 199.

There is a similar connection between the four forms of evil with which the clause concludes. Only that these four have a reference rather to others; whereas the three formerly mentioned arise more from a false view of a man's own inner self. *Envy*, which stands first, is the feeling which arises at the thought that another is superior to us in position, or in bodily or temporal gifts. Thus, Cain envied Abel. And his brethren were "moved with envy" towards Joseph (Acts vii. 9). And the heathen world was "full of envy" (Rom. i. 29). Whereas we are specially commanded not to live "envying one another" (Gal. v. 26). And this envy leads on to *Hatred*, which is the feeling of ill-will towards another, and aversion from him. And all hatred, whether it spring from envy or from any other cause, is essentially opposed to the love of God; so that he who entertains hatred towards another cannot really be living in the love of God (1 S. John iv. 20). And this hatred, again, leads on to *Malice*,* which is that thoroughly "wicked" state in which we are bent on bringing upon another all the evil we can, even though that other does nothing to provoke us. Thus the envy of the brethren of Joseph led to their hatred, and that to their malice, in which they meditated how they might rid themselves of him, and eventually devised the plan of selling him to the Midianites. It was owing to hatred towards the Saviour that the Jews were so

* "*Malitia*," from the Latin "*Malum*," *evil*, as if concentrating all the essence of evil and wickedness in itself.

“maliciously set against” Him, and endeavoured by every means, secret and open, to compass His death. And the Christian is emphatically bidden to put away all these; “anger, wrath, malice” (Col. iii. 8). And then last, as the general, radical, all-embracing fault, out of which, as the root, all these forms of ill-will towards others spring, we pray to be delivered from *Uncharitableness*, the want of real love for our fellow-men; to want which is to be in a state of opposition to God, who “is love,” and of spiritual death; for “he that loveth not his brother abideth in death,” as S. John writes (1 S. John iii. 14); whereas, reversely, the presence of this love in the soul would prevent envy, hatred, and malice, and also, to a great extent, vainglory and pride. For charity, or love, “envieth not;” “is not puffed up;” “seeketh not his own;” “thinketh no evil;” “suffereth long, and is kind,” according to the beautiful picture which S. Paul has left us of the working of Christian love (1 Cor. xiii).

From fornication and all other deadly sin, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

The prayer of the Litany passes on now, from the inward spirit of evil in the heart, to its issues and manifestations in outward act. And, taking that sin as a type and representative of sins of the flesh, sins which arise from indulgence of the bodily appetites, and so from a fleshly, as opposed to a spiritual, mind, we pray to be kept free from the evil of fornication. All such works of the flesh are condemned by S. Paul (Galat. v. 19-21). And we are specially bidden to “flee from fornication” (1 Cor. vi. 18),

as most of all polluting the body, which should be the Temple of God the Holy Ghost.

In some of the earlier Litanies the prayer was for deliverance from *the spirit of fornication*, which words showed the latitude of meaning in which the word fornication was to be taken, as including the whole range of sensuality and self-indulgence, all those "fleshly lusts which war against the soul," as S. Peter writes (1 Pet. ii. 11).* The same general idea is conveyed in our Litany by the addition of the words "and all other deadly sin;"† where the expression is probably not so much intended to draw a distinction between the more heinous and the more venial forms of sin,‡ but rather to remind us that all such sins as that against which we are praying are *deadly*, involving us in spiritual death, which is "enmity with God," and separation from Him now, and in eternal death in the world to come. For so we are distinctly told that "to be carnally minded is death" (Rom. viii. 6).

And here, as in the last clause but one preceding, going to the source from which these

* The Sarum Litany adds "from all uncleanness of mind and body," and, further on, "from unclean thoughts." In the York Litany it is "from all uncleannesses."

† The word "other" was added in 1549. The Litany of 1544 had only "all deadly sin." At the Savoy Conference it was suggested to change the word to *grievous* (probably from a dislike of the Roman distinction between mortal and venial sins), on the ground that "the wages of sin," as such, "is death." The Bishops answered, "For that very reason '*deadly*' is the better word."—From *Annotated Book of Common Prayer*.

‡ See 1 S. John v. 16, 17.

evils spring, we pray to be delivered from delusions respecting the true nature and guilt of sin, and respecting the real, in contrast with the seeming, value of honour, pleasure, riches, and the like. For we are continually liable to be deceived as to these things by *the flesh*, that is, our own nature within, so far as it is not renewed by the Spirit of God; and by *the world* without us, that is, by the pomp and attraction of outward things, which yet is but vain and hollow, and the influence of our fellow-men. Over and above which, there is the Devil, with his evil spirits, our great adversary, always endeavouring to lead us astray. And "we are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. ii. 11). We know that "Satan himself is transformed," when he pleases, "into an angel of light" (2 Cor. xi. 14). The world, with its glitter and evil companionship, affects us by evil example and custom, and leads us to form a false estimate of things. Then the flesh, with its natural appetites and inclinations, leads us to become engrossed with earthly things, dull and blind with regard to spiritual things, deaf to the voice of God in the soul; and so ensnares us away from attending to the true, eternal interests of our higher life. While the Devil is constantly raising doubts, suggesting difficulties, putting false interpretations on God's Word, sowing evil in the heart, removing the good seed sown; and so beguiling us from the one safe course of a steadfast walk with God according to His Law.

Now we have renounced, once for all, the allurements arising from all these three sources

in our Baptism, (see Baptismal Service, and Church Catechism), and at Confirmation, knowing that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit" (Galat. v. 17); and that we are bidden "Love not the world, neither the things of the world" (1 S. John ii. 15), and that we are to "resist the Devil" (S. James iv. 7). And so now, remembering our own frailty, with reference to the deceptions of all these three "treacherous dealers," we pray continually and fervently, "Good Lord, deliver us."

From lightning and tempest, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

We go on now to pray for deliverance from some of those forms of evil which are to be viewed more or less as visitations sent upon men as the punishment of sin, the "sore judgments" which God distinctly declares to be sent by Him upon the earth (Ezek. xiv. 21). Having prayed for deliverance from sin generally, and in some of its various forms, we may fitly go on to pray for deliverance from some of the chief temporal consequences of sin.

In the first group here are placed "*lightning and tempest*," representing the various kinds of electrical and atmospheric and other elemental disturbance which affright men, and bring destruction of life and property in their train. Such are earthquakes, and excessive rain or drought, and storms, such as the devastating cyclone which visited India in 1864, and again last year.* And, as such troubles are expressly

* Written in 1877.

sent, we are told, by God at times* (see Jonah i. 4, Ps. xi. 6), so we are emphatically directed to put our trust in Him in the midst of them when they come (1 Kings viii. 37; Ps. xci. 10, xlv. 1, 2, 3). And instances are given us of God's merciful deliverance from these and the other afflictions next to be mentioned in answer to prayer (S. James v. 18; Exod. ix. 23; 1 Kings xviii. 42; Ps. cvi. 30; 2 Chron. xx.; Is. xxxviii).

In the second group are set three troubles, *Plague*, *Pestilence*, and *Famine*, which affect more immediately the bodies of men. The word *Plague* carries back the thoughts to the great and terrible plague which visited England in 1665. And though we are now, in our own country at least, providentially freed from such wide-spread and malignant disorder, yet less terrible forms of disease, or pestilences, prevail amongst us very widely still. And these we may well pray of God, so far as it may be, to avert. Similarly, whereas famine, strictly speaking, is little known among us, yet vast numbers of our fellow-subjects in India are at this very time (1877) in extreme distress through it. And the total or partial failure of our crops may at any moment bring great scarcity on our land. So that we have great need always of this prayer. And, in offering the prayer, it should always be borne in mind that we are, indeed, praying of God in it that all may be led more

* In Psalm xxix. 7, it is said, "The voice of the Lord hews out flames of fire." For "when His voice strikes the cloud, it is riven asunder, and the hidden seams of glittering fire are excavated."—KAY on the verse.

and more to exert that vigilance, and care, and foresight, and diligence which are the necessary means to be used, if plague, and pestilence, and famine are to be kept away from our midst.

The third group contains those afflictions which mainly come upon us from the hands of our fellow-men. Such an affliction, on a great scale, is *battle*, and, still more, that whole state of conflict with enemies at home, or abroad, which is summed up as war. Such, too, is *murder*, or death by violence, or guile, at the hand of a fellow-man. And with these is joined *sudden death*, which we connect more commonly with murder on the field of battle, but which may also overtake us in other ways, and from which, for the most part, we instinctively shrink.*

* The words, in the connection in which they stand, can hardly, I think, be meant to *convey directly* any other meaning than that of, literally, sudden and unexpected death. They are not, I conceive, intended to *express* any high spiritual thought respecting death coming upon us unprepared. In the old Litanies the words were "sudden and unforeseen" (*a subitaneâ et improvisâ morte*), or words similar to these. And neither can these be taken strictly as intended to express "unprepared" in the highest sense.

At the same time the words of our own or other Litanies may well *suggest*, and bring forcibly to our minds, the thought of the main reason which underlies our fear of sudden death, viz., that we shrink from undergoing our great change without some little time for final preparation, and the performance of our last earthly duties; whence it comes that we desire a "leisurable departure," in Hooker's words (v. xlvi. 2.) "against the stream of sensual inclination," which would avoid the pain of gradual dissolution.

And hence we may be led to include in our prayer a desire that we may so live always, as that death may never surprise us unprepared, and also that we may have grace

Much question has been raised at times as to the propriety of introducing this prayer for deliverance from sudden death (which by some is rather desired than shunned); and as to the sense in which the words "sudden death" are to be understood. With regard to which it must be said that they seem most strictly to refer to that which is, literally, sudden death, which men, generally speaking, do undoubtedly desire to escape. But they may indirectly be regarded as suggesting the desire that we may be kept from so living as that death would surprise us unprepared to pass into the Presence of God.* It was noted as a special mercy in the case of the excellent Thomas Fuller, when he had been conveyed home after preaching his last sermon, and had lain unconscious for some time, that "it pleased God to restore to him the use of his faculties, which he very devoutly and thankfully employed in a Christian preparation for death, and commending himself to the will of God." And this was the more remarkable, as being exactly in accordance with his own meditation and prayer, in which there is the usual quaint-

to use such time as may be granted us for final preparation well.

But these thoughts flow out from the main petition, and may be viewed as corollaries from it. They are not expressed directly in the petition itself.

* According to Hooker, our prayer "importeth a twofold desire": (1) For some "convenient respite"; (2) If that be denied, then, at least, "that although death unexpected be sudden in itself, nevertheless, in regard of our prepared minds, it may not be sudden."—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer*.

ness of expression, bringing out more sharply the devotion of the underlying thought: "Lord, be pleased to shake my clay cottage before Thou throwest it down. Make it totter awhile before it doth tumble. Let me be summoned before I am surprised. Deliver me from sudden death. Not from sudden death in respect of itself, for I care not how short my passage be, so it be safe. Never any weary traveller complained that he came too soon to his journey's end. But let it not be sudden in respect of me. Make me always ready to receive death. Thus no guest comes unawares to him who keeps a constant table."* His prayer was in every respect fulfilled. For the death-stroke came upon him somewhat suddenly; and yet so as to allow him a little time for final preparation. And he so lived as never to be unprepared.

From all sedition, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

This last clause of the Deprecations has reference to three classes of evils; those relating to the Civil Polity, or State; those relating to the Ecclesiastical Polity of the Church; and those which relate to our own inner Spiritual State.

Of these, those relating to the State, *Sedition*, *Privy Conspiracy*, and *Rebellion*, stand first. They are all great disasters in themselves. And, beyond that, they are all opposed to God's law, which directs us to "render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," even when the Cæsar was a Roman Emperor, who exercised power by right of conquest over the chosen people of God. We

* *Good Thoughts in Bad Times.*

are bidden, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 S. Peter ii. 13); and "whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God," for "the powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. xiii. 1, 2; Comp. Heb. xiii. 7, 17). For both reasons, therefore, we pray to be delivered from Sedition, in which one part of the community is divided against another part, and regards the interests of the other part as opposed to their own; and from Privy Conspiracy, the secret plotting and devising of plans for effecting a revolution in the State, to which Sedition leads; and, still more, from Rebellion, the open and avowed resistance to constituted authority, carrying out its purposes by force.

Similar to these troubles in the State, are the three next following, which refer to the Church: *False Doctrine*, *Heresy*, and *Schism*. Of these, False Doctrine corrupts the pure Word of God, by adding to it what is not found in it, or withdrawing from it something which it teaches; whereas we are expressly commanded in the earlier part of the Bible, "Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it" (Deut. iv. 2). And at the close of it is said, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book." And "if any man shall take away from the words of this Book, God shall take away his part out of the Book of Life" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19).*

* On the view given in Holy Scripture of the danger of false teaching, Dr. Döllinger observes, "The Apostles held

Heresy is the maintenance of such error by one or a few, which introduces a spirit of disunion, and tends to set those who maintain the error in opposition to those who uphold the pure and complete truth of God.* And thus Heresy leads on to Schism, which is the actual separation of one party from another in the Church; the rending of what should be the seamless robe of Christ. The desire of our Lord in His last solemn prayer for His Church was, "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they all may be one in Us" (S. John xvii. 21); whereas now, how terribly is His Church divided and rent through False Doctrine, Heresy, and Schism! It is, we may well suppose, on account of the great evils re-

false teaching to be more mischievous than evil example, because (as a later writer words it) the latter poisons the stream, the former the fountain." St. Paul says emphatically, "If we or an angel from heaven preach to you another Gospel than that we have preached, let him be accursed." S. John, with all his gentleness, forbids the community to show hospitality to false teachers, or even to salute them.—(Gal. i. 8, 9; 1 John ii. 19; 2 John 9, 10. (*First Age of the Church*, vol. ii. p. 26.)

* So Hooker, treating of the "heresy" of Arius, writes, (vii. 9, 2), "An error repugnant to the truth of the Word of God is held by them, whoever they be, that stand in defence of any conclusion drawn erroneously out of Scripture, and untruly thereon fathered." Fuller, in his *Holy and Profane State*, observes, "We will branch the description of a heretic into these three parts: (1) He is one that formerly hath been of the true Church. (2) Maintaining a fundamental error. Not every false opinion doth make a heretic. (3) With obstinacy, which is the dead flesh, making the green wound of an error fester into the old sore of a heresy."

sulting from them, that S. Paul writes so severely respecting Heresy and Schism. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject" (Tit. iii. 10). "Mark them which cause divisions . . . and avoid them" (Rom. xvi. 17). "Now, I beseech you, brethren . . . that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions (or schisms) among you" (1 Cor. i. 10). And we may earnestly pray, therefore, that true doctrine and unity may exist in the Church, as well as that we may enjoy the blessings of civil harmony and peace.

And, as a last point, we pray to be kept from *Hardness of Heart*, and *Contempt of the Holy Will and Commandment of God*. Of these, hardness of heart is a state with which God visits sometimes those who have long persisted in opposition to His known Will. Thus it is said that God "hardened Pharaoh's heart" (Exod. ix. 12). It is this hardness of heart to which S. Paul refers when he speaks of men "being alienated from the life of God . . . because of the hardness of their heart" (Eph. iv. 18).* And our Lord is said to have been grieved at the "hardness of heart" of the Jews of His time (S. Mark iii. 5; Cf. xvi. 14, x. 5). This hardness of heart, which men thus bring upon themselves through sin long continued in and unrepented of, carries us much beyond the *blindness* of heart, for deliverance from which supplication was made before. For, whereas blindness of heart prevents our discovering what is right,

* In our version it is "blindness."

and what God's Will is, hardness of heart makes us indifferent with regard to God's Will when known, disinclined to act up to even what we clearly know to be right.

But the last evil mentioned in this clause goes one step further still, even to the lowest depths of spiritual degradation, when men not only neglect or refuse to obey God's known Will, but even treat with *contempt the Commandments of God*, and those who do endeavour to walk according to His Will as declared in His Word. (See Ps. i. 1 ; Jer. xv. 17.)

And as these terrible conditions of spiritual evil are the consequences of persistence in sin, so they again are themselves the causes of heavy punishment from God. As it is said, "Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out My Hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh: when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you" (Prov. i. 24—27). And again, more concisely and emphatically, "He that hardeneth his heart, shall fall into mischief" (xxviii. 14). And S. Paul writes: "But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God" (Rom. ii. 5).

It is to be observed that there is a close connection between the three groups of evils referred to here. For disorder in the State is

not uncommonly accompanied by division and distraction in the Church. And these are just the most favourable conditions for passion to be let loose, and for vices to rage, which lead men to indifference and contempt with reference to spiritual things. And, conversely, where there is disregard to God and His Word, these things lead to disorder and faction in the Church and in the State. So that on all grounds we should sincerely pray, "From all these evils, so connected together, and resulting from Thy righteous indignation against sin, we do earnestly beseech Thee to deliver us, Good Lord."

CHAP. IV.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Explain the term *Deprecations* as applied to the clauses following the Invocations of God, and show the plan upon which they are arranged.
2. Give the chief points contained in the first clause, and illustrate them from Scripture one by one.
3. Explain the general twofold form of evil from which we pray to be delivered in the second clause.
4. What are the faults from which we pray to be delivered in the third clause? Explain them, and show how they are condemned severally in Holy Scripture.
5. What is the force of the words "and all other deadly sin" in the next clause?
6. Explain exactly the "deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil," respectively.
7. Give the three groups of evils mentioned in the next clause, and explain the nature of the members of each group.

8. Show that these evils are said in Scripture to be sent sometimes directly as visitations from God ; and also that we may look to be delivered from them in answer to our prayers.
9. Explain the meaning of the words " sudden death."
10. Explain the several evils against which we pray in the last clause of the Deprecations, and show the connection which exists between them.



CHAPTER V.

THE OBSECRATIONS.

By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation, &c.
Good Lord, deliver us.

THERE is a pause here for a moment, before we pass on from the prayers that evil may be turned away from us, to those in which we pray for positive blessings for others and for ourselves. And this pause is occupied with an earnest invocation or cry of appeal to the Saviour for His merciful help. In these three clauses we plead first the great leading events in His life on earth, from his Incarnation, or birth in the flesh as Man, to His Ascension, whereby He passed back to the glory from which He came; and then we go on to represent before Him those occasions and crises in our own lives in which we more peculiarly need His help.

And the reason why we plead before our Lord

these great events in His life is, in order to bring before ourselves more distinctly and vividly all that has been done and borne by our Blessed Lord for our sakes, so that we may confidently and intelligently plead before Him, "O Thou, who in Thine infinite love hast gone through all this for us men, and for our salvation, help us also, O Lord, who pray to Thee, and deliver us from all evils of body and soul."

And further, over and above this general purpose of the commemoration of the great features in our Saviour's life, there is this reason for pleading them as we do singly one by one, that each separate event may be viewed as having its own special virtue and efficacy with reference to some corresponding element in our own lives, or to man's life on earth at large.* For "every action of our Lord Jesus," it has been truly said, "being the action of God, is of infinite value. We cannot tell how wonderfully great every one of them is; but we may plead them in turn before Him; we may ask Him, for the sake of what He did or suffered for us then, to deliver us now."

First, we pray, "*By the mystery of Thy Holy Incarnation.*" The Incarnation of Christ was His assumption of our human nature, so that He became *in carne*, or incarnate, as we, from the Latin, have framed our English word. "The

* The Obsecrations go on the principle that every several act of our Lord's mediatorial work has its appropriate saving energy; that virtue goes out of each, because it is the act of a Divine Person, and has a Divine preciousness.
—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer.*

Word was made Flesh, and dwelt among us," or, more strictly, tabernacled in us, as S. John writes (i. 14). That is, He took to Him that flesh or human nature which belongs to our race. For "it pleased not the Word of Wisdom of God to take to Itself some one person among men. . . . She made not *this or that man* Her habitation, but dwelt in us" (in Hooker's words). So that humanity, human nature at large, was cleansed and restored and raised by being taken into Deity, united to the Divine nature in Christ. And we can now plead for continual deliverance from evil, bodily and spiritual, on the ground of that assumption of our nature once for all to which the Son of God submitted in His infinite love, for the salvation of mankind.

This adoption of our nature we speak of as "the mystery;" yea, the mystery of mysteries. For so S. Paul writes, "Great is the mystery of godliness; God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Tim. iii. 16). And in another place (Rom. xvi. 25) he speaks of his own "gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ," which was, in other words, a "revelation of the mystery" which had been through long ages concealed. For this great truth, that the Creator should assume the nature of one fallen race among the creatures of His Hand, that God should become Man for the salvation of mankind, was indeed a mystery in the first and most strict sense of the word mystery, as expressing "such matters of fact as are inaccessible to reason, and can only be known through revelation of God"*; truths "unattain-

* Tholuck.

able by human knowledge, but revealed from the secrets of God."* And it is a mystery in another sense also, as being a truth which can only be accepted in faith, not fully comprehensible by human reason, even when revealed. For we can never fully understand, with our present limited faculties, how the human and Divine natures could be united, how the Saviour could be "perfect God and perfect Man" in One.

"*By Thy Holy Nativity*" is our second plea. For the very eternal Son of God deigned to be born of a pure Virgin, through the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost; as it is written, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (S. Luke i. 35). And through Him, the Son of God, thus made Man, we men, who had fallen away from God through sin, are made the sons of God afresh, adopted into the family of God again. And so S. Paul writes, that "God sent forth His son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). And the travail of childbirth is now lightened by the thought that a child is to be born into the world an heir of salvation through the nativity of Christ. Nay, more; a special blessing is attached to the work of rearing and educating children for God; as S. Paul writes (1 Tim. ii. 15), "She shall be saved

* Alford.

through her child-bearing;" that is, though excluded from the work of more public teaching, God has given to women another more private office in the Church, in the faithful discharge of which they are to work out their own salvation, that of peopling the Church by bearing and training children, to be citizens of the kingdom of God on earth.* And we now can pray in humble confidence to Him who, as Man, knows our weaknesses and dangers well, to "give" us "power" in the Holy Spirit "to become" more and more truly "the sons of God" (S. John i. 12), and to deliver us from all those things which might lead us to forfeit or impair our privilege of sonship through sin.

With the "Holy Nativity" of Christ is joined his *circumcision* as a further plea. For we read that "when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, His name was called Jesus" (S. Luke ii. 21), His very name—signifying "God our Saviour," Emmanuel, God with us—pointing to the deliverance He was to effect, the salvation He was to win, for men. And in thus submitting to the ordinance of circumcision, He did more than simply evince a patient endurance from His earliest years. For, in this, He who was to establish a world-wide religion accepted a rite which was the distinctive mark of the Jewish people, the mode of admission into the Jewish covenant, the form by which children were enrolled as members

* Dr. Döllinger, *First Age of the Church*, translated by Oxenham, ii. 220.

of the Jewish race, to which He, by His human parentage, belonged. Nor was it a mere, in itself, unmeaning sign. It was a symbol of the duty of cutting off all evil inclinations and desires, for all who would live up to the terms of their covenant with God. And yet He submitted to it, who could say, when assailed with temptation, that the Tempter "had nothing in Him," no slightest tendency to evil, no spark which his evil instigation might fan into a flame. Thus did He "become obedient to the Law for man," and set an example of loving obedience to all rightly-constituted authority and order, for His disciples to follow through all after-time. And we may fitly ask of Him now to keep us free from all that captious and insubordinate spirit, so opposed to the spirit of Christ, which engenders sedition and disorder in the State, and causes partisanship and dissension and division in the Church.

After the mention of the Holy Nativity and Circumcision of the Lord, there follow in a connected group, His *Baptism*; *Fasting*, and *Temptation*, as further grounds on which we rest our appeal to Him for help. They are closely connected. For it was soon, if not immediately after His Baptism, as it would seem, that our Lord was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; as it is said, by S. Matthew, "*Then was Jesus led up*" (iv. 1). And being thus led up into the wilderness, He fasted there for forty days and forty nights. And then, at the close of that protracted fast, His Temptation ensued.

By all which Holy Scripture would seem to teach us that no use of ordinances, no special outpourings of grace, no abstinence and self-denial, can exempt us from those temptations to which we are all more or less exposed ; however necessary these things are for us, and however great the Divine aid which they may procure for us, to enable us to resist temptation when it comes.

First, we plead His *Baptism*, which naturally follows next upon His Circumcision. For Baptism is the ordinance of admission into the Christian Covenant, as Circumcision was the ordinance of admission into the Jewish. The first was more negative and preparatory, signifying the duty of cutting off sin in every form for those who looked for a Saviour to come. Whereas Baptism is more positive and complete, symbolizing the washing away of sin which is in Christ, and the new birth unto righteousness, as well as the death to sin, which befits all who will be disciples of Him indeed. As Christ, “being born under the law,” underwent the Jewish rite, so He also submitted to be baptized, thus “sanctifying water to the mystical washing away of sin,” and Himself first accepting the initiatory ordinance of the new dispensation now to take its rise in Him. And when John the Baptist was earnestly set on hindering Him if he might,* as thinking himself all unfit to administer this rite to the All Holy One, the Saviour constrained him saying, “Suffer it to be so now; for so it behoveth

* Διεκώλυεν, the preposition *διὰ* expressing the *earnestness*, and the imperfect tense the purpose and *endeavour*.

us to fulfil all righteousness," *i.e.* to fulfil all the requirements of the law. So emphatically did He set His seal on the value of the ordinances which He would mercifully appoint for man's benefit, and give an Example to men of loving, self-abasing obedience. And we may now pray of Him to bless this His ordinance to our use, and to grant that we who have been presented to Him in Baptism, and "made His children by adoption and grace," may "daily be renewed by His Holy Spirit," and "increase in His Holy Spirit more and more, till we come to His everlasting kingdom."

Next we plead His *Fasting*, His long fast more especially of forty days, which we commemorate in the forty days of Lent. We read that, "when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered" (S. Matt. iv. 1, 2). And here again we are sure that it was for our sakes, and not from any necessity on His part, that this action was performed. He needed not any such sign of the control of self-indulgence, any such instance of self-restraint. But we believe that He would show us, hereby, the need that most of us have of "using such abstinence," in one or another form, "that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey His godly motions in righteousness and true holiness." And we can pray of Him, "who for our sakes didst fast forty days and forty nights," to bless our humble endeavours to curtail our wants, and check our desires, that we may be able to do good to others, and afford more ready access to His Holy Spirit ourselves.

And, as the last point here, we plead His *Temptation*, with a reference mainly to that great threefold Temptation recorded by all the three Synoptic Evangelists. Some of the other Litanies, which were probably in the view of Cranmer and those by whom the Litany was revised for the use of the English Church, had "tentations." So it was in the reformed Litanies of Hermann and Luther, as implying that though the Tempter was met and signally discomfited by our Lord at the beginning of His ministry, yet that he did but withdraw "for a season," "until a fitting opportunity should occur" * for him to return and renew his assault. Whereas in our Litany the mind is rather fixed on the one great Temptation of which the details are left on record for us. But whether we think of the one Temptation known to us, or of the many which may have been endured, though they are not revealed to our view, matters not. It is enough to consider that our Lord was tempted for our sakes. And now we can trustfully pray to Him who was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. iv. 15), beseeching Him to deliver us from "the crafts and assaults of the devil," so far as He may see fit, and to keep us and aid us by His grace when we are assailed. For we know that we now in Him "have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling

* "Ἀχρεὶ καιροῦ. (S. Luke iv. 13). So our Lord said afterwards "the Prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (S. John xiv. 30) ; with a reference probably to the future temptation from the Evil One which He was about to undergo.

of our infirmities" (Heb. iv. 15); but that, "in that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. ii. 18), if they do but put their trust in Him.

By Thine Agony and bloody Sweat, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

In this clause we are carried further into the depths of what was borne by Christ for man. The preceding clause opened with that mystery of the Incarnation, wherein our Lord entered into our world and took our nature, as Man. This clause concludes with that great event of the Ascension, wherein He passed back to the glory from which He came, as God, and sent forth to man the Holy Spirit in His stead. And, of the intermediate points, those in the first clause refer more to what He endured and did for man in the earlier part of His life on earth; those in the present clause to what He bore and did for man at its close.

First, we plead His *Agony* and *bloody Sweat*, referring to that great "agony" or "struggle" in the Garden of Gethsemane, of the nature of which but little is revealed to us; only we are told that "being in an Agony, He prayed more earnestly; and His Sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (S. Luke xxii. 44). And our Lord Himself, with a reference perhaps, especially, to this coming Agony, declared, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." He "began to be sorrowful and very heavy," as S. Matthew writes (xxvi. 37); "He began to be sore amazed,

and to be very heavy," in the language of S. Mark (xiv. 34), where our version hardly reaches to the height of the intensity which there is in the original words. And we now, thinking of this, can pray to Him to sustain us in those far lighter indeed, but still to us terrible, spiritual conflicts in which we may be called upon at any time to engage.

By Thy Cross and Passion is the next point in our Saviour's sufferings for us which we plead.* We appeal to His "Passion" or "Suffering," to all the insult and mockery, the scourgings and revilings, which He "the Man of Sorrows" endured for us, so that those words "the plowers ploughed upon my back and made long furrows" were terribly fulfilled. And we pray of Him, who bore these things for us, to "turn from us shame and reproach" and suffering, so far as it may be; and to sustain us in them, and enable us to bear them patiently, when they fall to our lot.

Then we plead His *precious Death and Burial*. His death of shame and torture upon the cross was the last point reached in all the terrible sufferings which He endured. And, whereas all His life on earth was one great work of redemption for man, a special efficacy is attributed to His death upon the cross in Holy Scripture throughout. "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body upon the tree," S. Peter

* In the Sarum Litany and others it was "By Thy Cross and Passion." In the Hereford and other Litanies it was "By Thy Passion and Cross."

writes (1 Pet. ii. 24), and “gave Himself” a ransom for all, in S. Paul’s words (1 Tim. ii. 6).^{*} Thus was His death most *precious*, precious before God, and precious to man. So S. Peter speaks of the “precious Blood of Christ” (1 Pet. i. 19, Cf. ii. 4); as S. Paul before had spoken of “the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood” (Acts xx. 28).[†] And a little further on in his Epistle S. Peter adds that, “unto you therefore which believe He is precious” (1 Pet. ii. 7). And now we may in humble confidence appeal to God by this His precious death. He who gave His only Son unto death for us, “how will He not with Him freely give us all things?” What may we not look for from Him who gave His own soul over unto death for us? “If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled unto God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life” (Rom. v. 10). And we need not fear death now, if Christ be with us. For He has taken away “the sting of death,” which, “is sin,” by His death upon the cross. And He has overcome the true death, even eternal death, in dying for us, and re-opened for us the gates of everlasting life, and “destroyed him

^{*} Doubtless the death of our Lord is *the* meritorious cause of our salvation; we are redeemed by *it*. . . . At the same time it is also true that all our Lord’s acts, as being related to His atoning Passion, are “sacramental” as well as “exemplary.”—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer*.

[†] So in one of the Ember Collects we say “Who hast purchased to Thyself an Universal Church by the precious Blood of thy dear Son.”

that had the power of death ; that is, the devil ” (Heb. ii. 14).

With His “precious Death ” we commemorate also the *Burial* of Christ, whereat Joseph of Arimathea, with Nicodemus, the once timid but now emboldened disciple, the one a Counsellor, the other a ruler of the Synagogue,* and therefore both men of honourable position, combined to lay the lifeless Body in the new Sepulchre at the garden, “wherein never man was laid.” And thus His Burial is full of import to us. For it declares to us that Christ verily died and rose again. “That we may believe Christ truly rose from the dead, we must be first assured that He died. And a greater assurance of His Death than this we cannot have, that His Body was delivered by His enemies from the Cross, and laid by His Disciples in the grave.”† Then, further, it is a figure and similitude of that which must spiritually take place in us. For we are to be “buried with Him in Baptism ” (Col. ii. 12), our old state being, as it were, buried and put away. And we can pray of Him who most surely died and was buried for us, that sin in its guilt and its power may be as though dead and buried in us, our “enmity ” “slain,” our transgressions pardoned, our evil inclinations, leading to a life of unrighteousness, more and more destroyed.

* The title of ἀρχων, applied to Nicodemus (S. John iii. 1), was a name employed to designate a member of the Sanhedrin. The ἀρχοντες are frequently referred to, as in vii. 26, xii. 42 ; S. Luke xxiii. 13, xxiv. 20.

† Bishop Pearson on the Creed, art. iv.

And now that we have reached the utmost depths of our Lord's Humiliation, we pass to His *glorious Resurrection* and *Ascension* which followed. The former clauses declared the *Love*, these now declare the *Power* of Christ. The former ones pointed to what He was *willing to do* in His Humiliation for our sakes. These show us what He *can do* for us in His glory by His grace. We speak of His Resurrection as "glorious," for in it He triumphed gloriously over death, "that He might open unto us the gate of everlasting life,"* and assured us of our own future Resurrection after the example, and in the power, of His. As He died for our sins, so "He rose again for our justification," as S. Paul writes (Rom. iv. 25.); that we may be assured that a perfect Atonement has been made for us, in that He who died for us "could not see corruption," but rose out of death as the Son of God; and also that in Him, thus raised again to Life, we may have an ever-living Intercessor and Guardian, enabling us so to live by His Spirit, that we may have confidence before God in the hope that we are accepted children in Him indeed. And we appeal to His Resurrection as the sure proof that a perfect Atonement has been made for us, and may be applied to us one by one by Him; and as a guarantee to us that He is Almighty to guide and protect those who look to Him. While we view it also as an emblem of the new, higher life which we are to live in Him; as it is written that "like

* Collect for Easter Day.

as Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life " (Rom. vi. 4).

After the "Glorious Resurrection" of our Lord, we plead His Ascension to Heaven, His "Wonderful Ascension" as it was in many of the old Litanies. When He, who had shown Himself by His Resurrection to be the Very Eternal Son of God, the Lord of Life, had "finished" His work for man, and had remained for forty days upon the Earth, speaking to His Disciples of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God, He could not but, we think, have gone back to the Glory from which He came. Accordingly, His Ascension is twice recorded by S. Luke; once, at the close of His Gospel (xxiv. 51), and again at the opening of the Acts of the Apostles (i. 9). And S. John records how, immediately upon His Resurrection, He had sent word to His Disciples, by Mary who had come to the Sepulchre, that they should see Him so ascend (xx. 17). And we plead His Ascension now, as knowing that we "have" in "Him" a "great High Priest that is passed into the Heavens" (Heb. iv. 14), and now "sitteth at the right Hand of God," there continually to intercede for us, and watch over us with constant, most loving care, as it is said "Wherefore He is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Heb. vii. 25). While further, we view His Ascension as a ground of hope "as an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast" (Heb.

vi. 19), that He has "gone" to prepare a "place" for us, "whither He the Forerunner has entered," "that where He is, there we may be also" with Him for ever. And it is also to us a figure of that higher life, wherein we should even now ascend in Spirit, and with Him continually dwell, "setting our affections on things above," "seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth at the right Hand of God" (Col. iii. 1, 2).

Last, we appeal to Him *by the Coming of the Holy Ghost*, whom He had promised to send from the Father to be in His stead; and whose coming was so important to us, that He declared, "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (S. John xvi. 7). And now we may ask of Him who has given us this most precious gift of the Holy Spirit, to give us also all such other blessings as we may need. While we may confidently trust that no evil will be allowed to overcome us, no harm to affect us permanently, if Christ is with us by His Holy Spirit, amid the dangers and troubles of life, (as He came to His disciples in the ship when in peril through the storm), comforting us in our afflictions, strengthening us in our weakness, purifying our affections, guiding our minds gently and gradually into all the Truth, working in us a conviction as to our many sins against God, our want of righteousness, and the judgment hanging over us from an all-righteous God, drawing us to God for pardon and aid, helping the infirmities of the

spirit, and assisting us when we draw near to God in prayer.

In all time of our tribulation, &c.

Good Lord, deliver us.

This last clause of the Obsecrations is occupied with the mention of those times at which, and circumstances under which, we specially need the Saviour's help. The first two points mentioned refer to the passing condition of our present life; the third relates to its solemn close; the fourth to that great final judgment which awaits all after Death.

First we speak of our times of *tribulation* and *wealth*, or well-being.* And it will be observed that we do not ask to be kept *from* tribulation, or to have wealth withheld; but to have grace so to use them, when they are sent to us ('*in*' tribulation, '*in*' time of our wealth), that we may gain the blessings, and avoid the dangers of them, either or both. For both the opposite seasons of sorrow and joy, adversity and prosperity have their respective dangers, and may be made means of temptation to evil, though they may also be turned by God, in His good Providence, into occasions of our great good.†

* This is understood to be the meaning of "wealth" here. And so it is used in the second prayer for the Queen in the Communion Office, "in wealth, peace, and godliness." But the dictionaries of the English language do not give other instances of the use. It seems to have been used in our Prayer Book instead of "prosperity," as having a wider signification.

† The Primer of 1535 had "in time of our tribulations, in the time of our felicity." The suffrage seems to refer

They may only make us discontented and rebellious, and so harden the heart more; as it was said of the Jews by God, "Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more" (Is. i. 5). But it may turn to our good, by drawing us nearer to God; so that it may be "good for us to have been in trouble." We may be "patient in tribulation" (Rom. xii. 12); and he comforted "in all our tribulation" by "the God of all comfort," as S. Paul was (2 Cor. i. 3, 4). Similarly, our prosperity or wealth, spiritual or temporal, may lead us only to gratitude to God, and to endeavours to use well to His Glory the gifts which we have received. But it does very often, on the contrary, make men proud, and self-reliant, and so draws away the heart from God. Hence Agur prayed against riches, "Lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, who is the Lord?" (Prov. xxx. 9; see Deut. xxxii. 15; Nehem. ix. 25, 26). And our Lord has expressly warned us of the danger of riches: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (S. Mark x. 23; see S. Matt. xiii. 22; xix. 23; 1 Tim. vi. 17). Therefore we pray of God to turn either of these states to our good, as one or other may fall to our lot; and to deliver us from the dangers which they respectively bring.

not only to deliverance out of afflictions, but to deliverance from the special moral dangers which attend them (Exod. vi. 9; Jer. v. 3; Hos. vii. 14; Amos iv. 6; 2 Chron. xxviii. 22; Rev. xvi. 11). It is the Christian's wisdom and happiness to learn the secret of strength against both these forms of trial, as S. Paul learned it (Phil. iv. 1).—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer.*

Then we pray of Him to keep us in *the hour of death*, at which time there are often special physical and spiritual afflictions in which we need more peculiarly the help of our Divine Lord. The body many times is racked with pain just before the final dissolution. And therefore, with the thought of death brought prominently before us as we stand beside the open grave, we pray of God, not to "suffer us for any pains of Death to fall from" Him (Burial Service). And the spirit cannot but quail somewhat at the thought of passing into the unseen world, and the Presence of an All-Holy God. So that we specially need to have the Saviour supporting us with His rod and His staff as we "pass through the valley of the shadow of death," assuring us that He is with us, enabling us to say with S. Stephen, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59), and comforting us with the thought that the great sting of death, which is sin, has been removed by Him.

Last of all, we pray of Him to keep us in *the Day of Judgment*, that great and terrible day of the Lord, when "He shall come again in His Glory to judge both the quick and dead," and we shall all "appear" (be manifested in our true being) "before the judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10), and all shall receive their final doom; and all shall be cast into the lake of fire, who are not "found written in the Book of Life" (Rev. xx. 15), according to the warning mercifully given through S. John. And we may well pray of Him, therefore, to acknowledge us as His in the Day of Judgment, and deliver us from

the terrible doom which all must suffer who are not forgiven in Him ; and so to keep that which we have committed to Him, even the spirit which is to live for ever, "*against that day*" (2 Tim. i. 18 ; comp. iv. 7. 8).

CHAP. V.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is meant by the *Obsecrations* ? and in what relation do they stand to the preceding and following parts of the Litany ? Give the exact force of the word "by" in each case.
2. Explain the meaning of the word "Incarnation." Why do we describe it as "Holy" ? And why is it called "the mystery" ?
3. What is the special efficacy for us of the "Nativity" and "Circumcision" of Christ ?
4. Show the connection between the Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation of our Lord ; and the value of each of these for us as grounds of appeal to Him.
5. Why are the Agony, Death, and Burial of Christ made subjects of another clause ? And what is the particular force of each one as pleaded here ?
6. Show how the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, are each of them effectual to us ; and state the grounds on which we plead them one by one.
7. What is the meaning of the third clause of the Obsecrations ? What are the special dangers to which we are exposed at the several occasions and conditions mentioned in it ?

CHAPTER VI.

THE SUPPLICATIONS.

PART I.

THE fourth and closing part of the first portion of the Litany is occupied with supplications, a few of which are *personal*, but the greater number of them are *intercessory*; that is, they are prayers for others, and not directly for the worshippers themselves. For such intercessions we have the fullest warrant in the Word of God. In offering them, we are, so far as we may, imitating our Blessed Lord, who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). And in the pattern prayer which He has given us, He directs us to pray for others throughout, saying, "*Our Father*," "Give *us* this day," "Forgive *us* our trespasses," "Lead *us* not, but deliver *us*." And many of the miracles which He wrought were done in answer to the faith and prayers of others; as it is said, that "seeing their faith," the faith of those who brought the paralytic man to Him, He cured him of his disease.* So St. Paul expressly exhorts that "intercessions be made for all men" (1 Tim. ii. 1). And there are numerous instances, both in the Old and New Testament, in which God's

* S. Mark ii. 5. Compare S. John iv. 49; S. Luke vii. 2-10; viii. 41-56; xi. 5-8; S. Matt. xv. 22-28.

holy ones poured forth such intercessory supplications to Him.*

We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord God, &c.

We beseech Thee to hear us, &c.

The first intercession is for *Christ's holy Church universal*, the "holy Catholic Church" of the Apostles' Creed, the "holy Church throughout all the world" of the *Te Deum*; that "mystical body which is the blessed company of all faithful people," of which the Head is Christ (Eph. v. 23), to Whom was given "dominion and glory and a kingdom" (Dan. vii. 13), and with regard to which He has promised that "the gates of hell"—the power of the kingdom of evil and death—"shall not prevail against it" (S. Matt. xvi. 18).

The intercession opens, it will be noticed, with the words "*We sinners* do beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord God." Thus we repeat here, at the opening of the supplicatory portion of the Litany (what had been expressed in the Invocations and the Deprecations before) that, as sinners, we can look only to God's *mercy*, and that we rest our whole claim upon that. While, further, we renew our declaration of faith that He whom we are addressing is none other than the Lord our God.

The prayer which we make to Him for His universal Church is, that He will "*rule and govern it in the right way.*" Thus we pray of Him to rule it as its spiritual King, setting

* See Gen. xviii. 23-33; Exod. xxxii. 30-32; Acts vii. 60; xii. 5; Eph. i. 16-19.

before it the true aim and end, and imposing upon it such laws as may be best. And we beseech Him further to guide or "govern" it,* steering it, like a skilful pilot, on its course, and delivering it from the dangers to which it is exposed. And so we look to Him to keep it "in the right way,"† the true path heavenward of faith, and holiness, and peace.

And this our prayer we look to have fulfilled more particularly through God's guidance of those who have power on earth to control the destinies of the Church; through His appointment of wise and faithful rulers and ministers in the Church itself; and through His shedding abroad more and more abundantly the grace of His Holy Spirit, to enlighten the minds, and sanctify the affections, and strengthen the wills, of all the members of His Church on earth.

That it may please Thee to keep, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

That it may please Thee to rule her heart, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

That it may please Thee to be her defender, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

That it may please Thee to bless and preserve,
&c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

After praying for Christ's Church at large, we go on to pray first for *our most gracious*

* So we say "*govern* them, and lift them up for ever," in the Te Deum.

† It should be remembered that the primary meaning of "rule," as of "*rego*" (the word used in the original), is to keep in a straight line.—REV. E. DANIEL.

Queen and Governor, “over all persons, and in all causes, ecclesiastical as well as civil, within these her dominions supreme” (Bidding Prayer).^{*} We say in one of the prayers for the Sovereign in the Communion Office, “We are taught by Thy holy Word that the hearts of kings are in Thy rule and governance,” with a reference to such passages as that in the Proverbs of Solomon, “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will” (xxi. 1). And we are expressly directed by S. Paul to pray especially “for kings” (1 Tim. ii. 1, 2). For it is “by the grace of God” that “kings reign, and princes decree justice” (Prov. viii. 15; see Dan. ii. 21; Rom. xiii. 1); and the “powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. xiii. 1). And, moreover, by reason of the great responsibility they are under, and the great interests intrusted to them, and the vast influence which they exercise for good or evil, they specially need our prayers.[†]

^{*} See Article XXXVII., with Bishop Harold Browne’s Notes and Canon i.

[†] Hence it is our duty to pray for them, and it is also our wisdom also. For the godliness and well-doing of a nation depends very much upon its rulers. The books of Kings and Chronicles teach us that when the kings of Judah and Israel were wicked, the people also fell into wickedness. “Jeroboam did sin” and “made Israel to sin” (1 Kings xiv. 16); and when Manasseh did evil in the sight of the Lord, he “made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err and to do worse than the heathen” (2 Chron. xxxiii. 9). For the sake of our nation, therefore, and for our own sakes, we should pray for the Queen. Besides, kings and princes

We pray for the Sovereign as "Thy servant Victoria, our most gracious Queen and Governor." For the Sovereign is the servant or "minister of God" (Rom. xiii. 4), His vicergerent in the execution of justice and the administration of the State.* And we style her our *most gracious* Sovereign Lady; for so in some of the very ancient Liturgies the Sovereign was described,† as the fountain of honours and blessings to her people, and herself the recipient of grace from God, the fountain-head of all.

Our prayer for the Queen is threefold. First, we pray generally that God will *keep and strengthen her in the true worshipping of Him*, that others also her subjects may be led more and more to worship Him truly, as He has revealed Himself to us, and according to the ordinances which He has appointed; and that she may live in a spirit of *holiness*, showing

have special temptations from their high station, and therefore more than others require the help of our prayer. But God "giveth salvation unto kings" (Ps. cxliv. 10); and we must beseech Him to do so, remembering that when S. Paul bids us pray for all men, he adds, "For kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty" (1 Tim. ii. 2).—*Manual of the Litany*, by S. W., pp. 26, 27.

* "Thy chosen servant Victoria" in the first prayer for the Sovereign in the Communion Office, as brought to her position of authority by the Providence of God.

† So in the Liturgies of S. Chrysostom and S. Basil the form was: "Let us beseech the Lord for our most religious and divinely protected kings." The two senses of the word *gracious*, (1) passive, receiving favour from another; (2) active, imparting favour to others, are closely interlinked, and may both be implied in the word "*gracious*" here.

itself in the *righteous* fulfilment of her duties towards Him, and towards mankind.

Then, secondly, we pray, with a view to this, that God will so influence her heart, by the motions of His Holy Spirit, that her life may be *ruled by the faith, the fear, and the love* of Him; that her whole *affiance* or trust may be rested upon Him; and that *His honour and glory* may be the great aim of her life.*

And, thirdly, we pray that God will be *her defender and keeper* (as it is declared in the 90th and 91st Psalms that He will keep those who trust in Him), turning evil from her as far as it may be, and protecting her in it when it is allowed to assail her, and enabling her to overcome it; and this, whether the enemies be temporal adversaries, or the agents of the great spiritual adversary, endeavouring to lead her into sin.†

With our prayers for the Sovereign is joined one for the heir-apparent, the *Prince of Wales*, the *Princess of Wales*, and *all the Royal Family*, wherein we beseech God to *bless* them with all blessings spiritual and temporal, and to *preserve* them from all dangers of body and soul. The petition was added at the beginning of the 17th

* “That in all her thoughts, words, and works, she may ever seek Thy honour and glory” (Prayer in Communion Office).

† That spiritual as well as temporal enemies may have been included under the word “enemies” is shown by a passage from one of the old forms communicated to the Author by Dr. Jacobson, the Bishop of Chester. It is quoted in a note in the Author’s *Litany of the English Church*, p. 118.

century, "when James I. was securely seated on the English throne, with the prospect of transmitting it to his children."

That it may please Thee to illuminate, &c.
We beseech Thee.

We go on now to pray of God who is "the Father of Lights," from whom comes "every good and perfect gift" (S. James i. 17), to *illuminate* or enlighten all the ministers of His Church, in their several orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. So S. Paul writes: "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. iv. 6; comp. Eph. i. 18). They receive their commission *from* God, though *through* men, as those whom "the Holy Ghost has made overseers" (Acts xx. 28) of the flock of Christ. And we may well ask of Him to keep and bless those whom He has sent. And they specially need the prayers of the people, on account of the great responsibilities of their office. For they are set "to feed the Church of God" (Acts xx. 28); and they "watch for our souls as they that must give account" (Heb. xiii. 17). Therefore we pray God to enlighten them with *true knowledge* of the great principles and truths of *His Word*, and with true *understanding* of the practical lessons which it conveys.* And further, to pray of Him so to guide

* The words may be taken from Coloss. i. 9; *σοφία* "wisdom" is "primary and absolute"; whereas *σύνεσις* and *φρόνησις*, "intelligence" and "prudence," modes of the

them, that they may, both in their ministerial and their private life (for in this latitude of meaning the words "*both by their preaching and living*" are to be understood), proceed *according to what is taught them in God's Word respecting God and His will*; and thus at once *show it forth* in the conduct of their lives, and also *set it forth* in their teaching and all the functions of their ministerial work.*

That it may please Thee to endue the Lords of the Council, &c.

We beseech Thee to hear us, &c.

That it may please Thee to bless and keep the Magistrates, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

After praying for the Queen as supreme, and then for those who are in authority in the Church, we go on to pray in the next two clauses for those "who are in authority under her" in the State. And here we refer to two classes; those whose work is deliberative, and who are set to guide the councils of the sovereign by their advice; and those whose functions are executive rather, who are to carry out the purposes of the sovereign, and the law of the State. Of these, those whose work is to advise and deliberate are placed first. For the head must first plan, what afterwards the hand is to execute.

Accordingly, we pray in the first place for

understanding—are "derivative and special."—See Professor Lightfoot on the verse.

* "That they may both by their life and doctrine set forth Thy true and lively Word" (Prayer for Church Militant). Compare Collects for Ember Week.

that now large body of which the "*Privy Council*" is composed,* whose duty is generally to advise the sovereign faithfully and wisely to the utmost that they can, and who stand pledged not to divulge the secrets of those counsels in which they have shared. For these, and for *all the Nobility*, all who are in positions of honour and influence, we pray that God will *endue*, that is clothe or invest them (from the Latin word "*induo*"), with all necessary mental, and moral, and spiritual gifts.† Therefore we pray of Him from whom these blessings proceed,‡ to give them *grace*, His spiritual influence in the heart, that they may have only high, pure aims in view in all that they advise; and *wisdom*, that they may discover rightly the true objects which should be pursued by the State, and the true principles by which it should be regulated; and *understanding*, in order that they may adopt only such measures as may fitly and honourably serve for the attainment of the ends proposed.

From this we pass on to pray in the second clause for *the Magistrates*, where the word is used with a greater latitude of signification than it has with us now, and expresses all those who

* They are styled here "the Lords of the Council"; but their title now is usually "right-honourable," the title "Lord" being confined generally, though not universally, to the peers of the realm.

† It is in this way that the word "endue" is repeatedly used in our offices; "Endue them with innocence of life (2nd Collect in Ember weeks). "May also be endued with heavenly virtues" (Baptismal Office).

‡ See Psalm lxxxiv. 11; Prov. ii. 6; S. James i. 5; 1 Kings iii. 12.

are appointed to execute justice in the State, and interpret, apply, and enforce the laws. And these, perhaps, may be regarded as representing all those who in various ways and degrees exercise jurisdiction over others, and carry out the purposes of the State. For these Magistrates we pray that God will *bless* them, supporting, strengthening, guiding them, in their difficult work, and *keep* them from the dangers to which they may be exposed, and from the errors to which they are liable,* so that they may “truly and indifferently” minister *justice* as before Him, without bias and partiality, without negligence or haste; and also may *maintain the truth*, so that under equal and upright laws, fairly administered, all alike may obtain their rights, and the guilty may be punished, and the cause of the innocent be upheld.†

* In David’s old age he said, “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God” (2 Sam. xxiii. 3). And in other countries where the magistrates are not upright and just, the people are in a miserable condition. When the judges of Israel afflicted the just and took bribes, and turned aside the people from their right, God’s Prophet said that it was an evil time (Amos v. 12, 13). So we may well pray for our judges and magistrates, “that they may judge, not for man, but for the Lord,” and that “the fear of the Lord may be upon them” (2 Chron. xix. 6. See also Ezra vii. 25).—*Manual of the Litany*, by S. W., p. 29.

† The Rev. E. Daniel observes that “when the Prayer Book was compiled, the words ‘maintain truth’ had a more specific meaning. It was part of the duty of the magistrate to maintain ‘true religion,’ as well as ‘virtue.’” In this view, the words would shortly express what is put more fully in the Prayer for the Church Militant, “to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of Thy true religion and virtue.”

That it may please Thee to bless and keep all Thy people.

We beseech Thee, &c.

That it may please Thee to give to all nations, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

After these prayers for the Queen and for those in positions of influence and authority in Church and State, the intercessory petitions take a wide range again, similar to that which was presented to the view at first. Only, in the first clause, the prayer was for the Church of Christ regarded as a united body, as a whole. Now, in praying for *all His people*, our prayers are offered up for it rather with reference to all the individual members of which it is composed. In the true, ancient, all-embracing spirit of a Litany, we pray for all, of whatever nationality, in whatever condition, who belong to Christ's Church on earth. Once, under the old dispensation, the people of Israel were "His people," His chosen people. But now "we" too, who once were "aliens," "are His people, and the sheep of His pasture" (Ps. c. 3); and we can take to ourselves the words, "He shall save His people from their sins" (S. Matt. i. 21). For now "A light" has shone forth "to lighten the Gentiles" as well as to be "the glory of God's people, Israel" (S. Luke ii. 32).*

And now we pray to God for all His people,

* Compare the prayers "Save Thy people, and bless Thine heritage" in the *Te Deum*. And "To all Thy people give Thy heavenly grace" in the *Prayer for the Church Militant*.

somewhat in the spirit of the Psalmist's words "O save Thy people and give Thy blessing unto Thine inheritance; feed them, and set them up for ever" (Ps. xxviii. 10). And we beseech Him to *bless and keep* His people, repeating the words which have once exactly, and twice almost exactly, been employed before, and praying Him to bless them with all blessings spiritual and temporal, and to keep or preserve them free, as far as may be, from all evils of body and soul.*

In the second of these two clauses a different view is taken of mankind, and they are regarded, not now so much as the members of the Church of Christ, but as they are grouped into various nationalities spread over the earth. And, viewing now these *nations*, with all their interests, and all the dangers to which they are exposed of conflict and dissension in their own internal relations, or in their relations one to another, we pray of God that He will grant them the spirit of *unity* at home, preserving them from every form and degree of discord and civil strife. Then we pray of Him to grant them *peace* with one another, so that they may escape the horrors of war. And, with a view to these blessings, we pray of Him to grant them that *concord*, that harmony of spirit and aim, which most tends to preserve peace among nations, as well as unity among the various individuals and parties

* "For the Lord God is a sun and a shield" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); "A sun, radiating forth good; a shield, protecting from evil." (Kay on the verse.)

of which each nation is composed. And we may well ask for these blessings from Him who is the Prince of Peace, and whose disciples, the more truly they become His disciples, will be so much the more filled with the spirit of love, which is the one sure foundation of peace.

CHAP. VI.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. What is the general character of the *Supplications* in the Litany, and what two kinds of Supplications are there in it?
 2. Give the grounds from Holy Scripture and the natural reason for offering Intercessory Prayer.
 3. Show the penitential character of this and all the parts of the Litany.
 4. Explain the meaning of the “Holy Church Universal,” for which we pray first. What prayer do we make for it?
 5. Give the chief points of the prayers which we offer for the Queen.
 6. What is the meaning of the prayer which is offered for the Ministers in Christ’s Church?
 7. Explain the “Lords of the Privy Council,” the “Nobility,” and the “Magistrates,” for whom we next pray. What is it which we request for each class?
 8. Give the nature and scope of the two intercessions for “all God’s people,” and for “all nations.”
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NOTE.—It has been suggested to the writer, while these sheets were passing through the press, that the Cabinet, with whom the management of the affairs of the country rests so largely, is, in fact, a Committee of the Privy Council, and may therefore be in the minds of the worshippers when they offer the clause, “That it may please Thee to endue the Lords of the Council,” &c.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SUPPLICATIONS.

PART II.

That it may please Thee to give us a heart, &c.
We beseech Thee, &c.

THERE is no real line of demarcation between the clauses considered in the former chapter and those remaining clauses which are to be examined in this. It is only in order to assist the memory, and to avoid overtasking the attention, that a division is made: though it will be found, in a general way, that the preceding clauses look somewhat more to classes of men in reference to their positions of authority and influence, and that the clauses which now follow relate rather more to classes of men in respect of their special needs, or the dangers to which they are exposed.

In this present clause, in the words "That it may please Thee to give *us* an heart," &c., after the view given of "all God's people," and "all the nations" of the world, in the two preceding clauses, the Litany contracts itself for a moment to the worshippers themselves; though they will naturally have a thought of the other members of Christ's Church, and more specially of their relations, neighbours, friends, as all included in the words "us" here.

And the great blessing which we desire of God is that we may have *a heart to love and fear Him*. Where by the "heart" we may understand the centre of our spiritual being, corresponding to the literal heart, when we regard it as the centre of our physical life. The heart receives from the spiritualized intellect the truths of faith; as S. Paul writes, "With the heart man believeth" (Rom. x. 10). And that, "unto righteousness." For from the heart, thus influenced, proceed the thoughts and imaginations, the feelings, affections, and desires, the motions of the will, and the actions and conduct of life. Therefore we pray of God to enable us to fulfil His command, "My son, give Me thy heart" (Prov. xxiii. 26), so that we may be able to answer, "O God, my heart is ready, my heart is ready" (Ps. cviii. 1), adopting the Psalmist's words.

And as there are two great motives which influence the heart of man, love and fear (or dread, which is a more solemn and intense form of fear), we pray of God to give us a heart so affected continually that we may *love and fear Him*. Of these two motive powers, love impels us and draws us to do what is right; while fear holds us in check, and deters us from doing what is wrong. And through these two motives we shall be led diligently to *live after the commandments of God*. For we shall be earnestly set on doing what He commands, and would have us do, from a deep, earnest love of Him and desire to fulfil His will. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" (1 S. John v. 3),

as the sign of the presence of that love, and the fruit which it will assuredly produce. And, similarly, "the fear of the Lord is to hate evil" (Prov. viii. 13), making us shrink from doing that which would displease God, and call down His judgments here and hereafter, and grieve a Father of boundless mercy, a Saviour of infinite love. So that it, too, will lead us "diligently to live after God's commandments," though by another path. For it will lead us *not to do* what God would not have done, as love will lead us *to do* what He would have done. And so it is written, "That thou mightest fear the Lord thy God, to keep all His statutes and commandments" (Deut. vi. 2). But love (it has been truly said) is the more excellent principle of the two. For while "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. cxi. 10), "love is the fulfilling of the Law" (Rom. xiii. 10). Fear is, in some respects, the lower, more slavish principle. Love is the higher motive, belonging to the liberty of the children of God, where "perfect love has cast out fear."

That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

The Litany now expands itself again, like a river which has been pent up for a moment in a narrower channel, and then pours forth its waters over the broad expanse again. The prayer for all God's people before had been that God would bless them with good, and preserve them from evil. Now, the prayer is that God would give them continual *increase of His grace*. By "grace"

is meant the manifestation of God's favour (*gratia*) to mankind, specially by the gift of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on man, for Christ's sake, to aid man, and draw him nearer and nearer to God, and prepare him for everlasting life";* as it is written, "The Lord will give grace and glory" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11); "grace" to help now, and "glory," in the present partial, and future complete, glory of those who are made His saints, His holy ones, by His grace. And this grace is absolutely necessary for us. For "without Me," without My grace or help, "ye can do nothing," our Lord declared; and all "our sufficiency is of God," as S. Paul wrote, in reference specially to ministerial work. But that grace is quite sufficient for us; and we are bidden "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12, 13). This gracious help of God we are to seek for by prayer, united and private, in meditation on God, through the sacraments, and by all the "means of grace," the channels through which God bestows His gifts. And we must seek it, not once for all, but continually. The manna was given afresh to the Israelites daily. And we need, day by day, a supply of spiritual, as of literal, food sufficient for the needs of the passing day. And, more than this, we ask for an *increase of grace*, that we may grow, and make progress in the spiritual life.

* See S. John i. 17; Rom. v. 15; 2 Cor. ix. 8; Phil. i. 9-11; 1 S. Pet. ii. 2.

S. Paul declares that "God is able to make all grace *abound* toward you" (2 Cor. ix. 8); for He gives to those who ask Him with no sparing hand. And S. John writes, that "of His fullness have we all received, and grace for grace" (i. 16); higher gifts of grace in place of the lower ones; new grace as the result of our having used well what was given before.* Accordingly, as we prayed before for all God's people that they might, by God's blessing upon them, be kept from evil, and enabled to live well (so far as the clause had reference to spiritual things), we pray here that they may more and more overcome evil, and may walk more and more closely with God.

The end for which we desire this grace, and the result which it should produce, are declared to be that we may, through the leading of the Spirit, *hear God's Word* read or preached, with *meek* submission of intellect and will, according to the exhortation of S. James, "Receive with meekness the engrafted Word" (i. 21). And then, further, that we may *receive it with pure*, sincere, genuine, *affection*, as "able to make us wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15), and, in this way, "able to save our souls" (S. James i. 21); and as "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction"—that is, instruction with reference to righteousness before God (2 Tim.

* This seems the general *spirit* of the words. Though, strictly, probably, they express the gift of the new Dispensation, with its blessings to those who have profited by the old.

iii. 16).* Accordingly, the Psalmist writes respecting it, "Lord, what love have I for Thy Law; all the day long is my study in it." "The Law of Thy mouth is dearer unto me than thousands of gold and silver" (Ps. cxix. 97, 72); and we desire that our love may be like his. And then, as a last point, we desire God's grace *that we may bring forth the fruits of the Spirit*, such as those described by S. Paul in his Epistles to the Galatian and Ephesian Churches (Gal. v. 23; Eph. v. 9), which are the graces of a spirit rightly affected towards God, towards its fellow-men, and in itself; and which are the results of the good seed of the Word of God in the heart "bringing forth fruit unto perfection," and issuing in the actions and conduct of a godly, righteous, and sober life. "Therefore," it is written—that is, that ye may enjoy the blessings of those who obey God's Word, and escape the penalties of those by whom it is disobeyed—"shall ye lay up these My words in your heart and in your soul, . . . and ye shall teach them your children." And the unknown author of the 119th Psalm says, "Thy words have I hid within my heart, that I should not sin against Thee" (Ps. cxix. 11).

That it may please Thee to bring into the way of truth, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

This clause is strictly an intercessory one, in which we pray for those who are wandering from the right and narrow way towards Heaven, and

* παιδείαν τὴν ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ.

have “erred and strayed like lost sheep,” and so have missed the true aim of life, and are in danger of being lost.

So Abraham prayed for wicked Sodom (Gen. xviii. 23-33); Samuel for the Israelites (1 Sam. xii. 23); and Job for his friends who had displeased God (Job xlii. 8). And S. John says, “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and He shall give Him life for them that sin not unto death” (1 John v. 16.)*

And we distinguish here two classes. One is that of *those who have erred*, “gone out of the way” (Rom. iii. 12; comp. 2 S. Pet. ii. 15), “erred from the faith” (1 Tim. vi. 10), and so, through indifference, or ignorance, or vice, have fallen into error or sin. And the other is that of *those who have been deceived*, led astray through the subtilty of the Evil One, by “Evil Men and Seducers” (2 Tim. iii. 13), or by the example of evil companions, and the influence of the world.

And for all such we pray of God that He will mercifully bring them *into the way of truth*, “the way of Salvation” (Acts xvi. 17), “the path of life” (Ps. xvi. 2); which is in itself “the way of righteousness” (S. Matt. xxi. 32), and which is, in its attendant blessing, “The way of peace” (S. Luke i. 79).†

That it may please Thee to strengthen, &c.
We beseech Thee, &c.

* *Manual of the Litany*, p. 33.

† Compare the 3rd Collect for Good Friday, and the Prayer for all conditions of men.

The former clause regarded men as liable to wander or be led astray from the right, heavenward path, more especially, perhaps, through want of a clear perception, of right and wrong. This clause regards men as engaged in a continual conflict with evil. The life of a Christian is a state of warfare. He is called upon to "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. vi. 12); "to war a good warfare" (i. 18).

There are three conditions of men with reference to this spiritual battle; and for each class God's help is implored. First, there are those *who stand*; who do stand firm against all the temptations of the Evil One, on the whole, either having been kept from falling all along, or having found grace to recover themselves out of the snares of the Devil (2 Tim. ii. 26). Such as these fulfil S. Paul's direction, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (1 Cor. xvi. 13). But since even these are always in danger—"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12)—we pray of Him who alone "is able to keep us from falling" (Jude 24), to "*strengthen* them with might by His Spirit in the inner man" (Eph. iii. 16), that they "may be able to withstand in the evil day" of temptation, "and having done all to stand" (Eph. vi. 13).

Then, secondly, there are those who are *weak-hearted*; those who, by natural temperament, or through past failures, are always fearful of yielding to temptation, and of losing the favour of God, and so are "weary and faint in their minds" (Heb. xii. 3). We pray for these that

God will *comfort* them in so far as they are desponding. For He is "the God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3), who will not break the bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax (Is. xlii. 3). And also we beseech Him to *help* them with His grace, that they may more and more win the victory, and gain confidence in the support of God.

Then, thirdly, we pray for *those who fall*—not merely for those who have fallen,* but, still more, for those who yield to evil—continually, and with whom temptation is only another name for fall. For these we pray of God that He will *raise* them *up*, not suffering them to be cast away (Ps. xxxvii. 24), but "renewing them again unto repentance" (Heb. vi. 6), and then restoring them when penitent (Ps. xxiii. 3), and enabling them to rise to a new life of righteousness, out of the death of past sin. And in all this He must both encourage them with the hope of forgiveness for the past, and assist them for the future by His grace.

And, as the conclusion of all, the final result of the great spiritual conflict in which we are engaged, we pray of Him to *beat down Satan, finally, under our feet*; as it is said by S. Paul, "the God of peace shall bruise [or 'tread,' as in the margin] Satan under your feet shortly" (Rom. xvi. 20), enabling us more and more to resist his temptations to the end, and to stand triumphant over him at the last day by God's grace.

That it may please Thee to succour, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

* So Hermann's *Litany* has "lapsos erigere."

The last clauses have had reference to spiritual evils. It is more to temporal evils that this clause relates. And we specially mark in it those who are *in danger* of some evil, which is yet future, though likely to befall; those who are in some present need and *necessity*; and those who are in *tribulation*, suffering under the pressure of some evil, as those in necessity are in need of some good.

And for these three classes severally we make three requests. For those in danger we pray that God will *succour* them, coming speedily to their aid (according to the meaning of the Latin word *succurrere*, from which our “succour” comes), and preserve them (as far as may be) from the perils of which they are afraid. For those in need and necessity we pray that He will *help* them, giving them support in that respect in which they may need it most; as the Psalmist wrote, “He shall deliver the poor when he crieth, the needy also, and him that hath no helper” (Ps. lxxii. 12). And for those in tribulation we pray that He will *comfort* them, giving them that consolation, that “peace which passeth all understanding,” amid the pains and sorrows, the bereavements and losses, the anxieties and cares of life, which He alone is able to bestow.

That it may please Thee to preserve all that travel, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

This clause, and the following one (it has been noticed), illustrate the foregoing clause; for in them we specify certain classes who are in

danger, necessity, and tribulation ; while it is in the fullest degree intercessory, inasmuch as we pray in it for those who are prevented from being with us and praying for themselves.

Thus, we pray for those who *travel by land or by water*, and who are thus exposed to many dangers. In early times, indeed, those dangers were far greater, and this clause had then a special force.* But when we think of the numberless accidents which befall those who travel by longer or shorter journeys from place to place, and the great perils to which those are exposed who are upon the deep, especially those who “occupy their business” (Ps. cvii. 23) upon the waters, through shipwreck and other less terrible calamities, we may well pray to God to keep us “in our going out and coming in” (Ps. cxxi. 8), and to preserve those who travel, inasmuch as “safety is of the Lord” (Prov. xxi. 31) alone.

Then we pray for *women labouring with child*, whose danger is so great that the Psalmist speaks of great alarm as the fear “as of a woman in travail” (Ps. xlviii. 6). And in the Service Thanksgiving, or “Churching of Women,” we

* There is a striking prayer to this effect in the Liturgy of S. Basil : “Sail with them that sail ; journey with travellers ; deliver the captives ; shield the orphans ; heal the sick.” And again, in the Liturgy of S. Chrysostom, there is the prayer : “Remember, Lord, them that voyage, and travel, that are sick, that are labouring, that are in prison, and their safety.” Some other similar forms have been quoted in the Author’s *Litany of the English Church*, p. 113.

give God thanks for that "it hath pleased Thee to deliver this woman Thy servant from the great pain and peril of child-birth."

Then we pray for *all sick persons, and young children*. In the case of the sick there are often danger, and necessity, and pain, combined; so that we may well pray to God for them, that He will graciously comfort, and succour, and relieve them, and turn their sickness to their true good. And so the Psalmist writes, "The Lord comfort him when he lieth sick upon his bed; make Thou all his bed in his sickness" (Ps. xli. 3). The young children are exposed to many dangers, and those of various kinds; and they are little able to take care, or to pray, for themselves. And therefore we pray to the Saviour to take under His guardianship the little children, towards whom He has declared His loving sympathy, His tender care.

And then, as a last point, we pray for *all prisoners and captives*, that so we may at least in spirit and by our prayers visit those who are "sick and in prison," according to the Will of our compassionate Lord.* There is still a terribly large array of prisoners in each state, who need our prayers in the highest degree, not only on account of the sufferings and privations which they are required to endure, but, still more, by reason of the danger they are in of becoming, not reformed by punishment, but rather hardened in crime. "At the time when the Litany was drawn up," it has been observed, and for

* S. Matt. xxv. 36; Compare Heb. xiii. 3.

long after, piracy on the Mediterranean and even on the British seas was of common occurrence. Large numbers of persons taken prisoners by Algerian pirates were sold as slaves in the markets of Africa.* And in those days, therefore, there would be a fuller significance attaching to this portion of the clause.

That it may please Thee to defend and provide for the fatherless children, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

This clause carries on the general subject of the clause preceding. And in it we pray of God, "who is the Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widow" (Ps. lxxviii. 5), to take under His special charge *the fatherless children and widows*. And we pray of Him at once to *defend* them from the many evils to which, by reason of their defenceless condition, they are peculiarly exposed; and also to *provide* for them in their necessities, in that they are so little able to provide for themselves, and are deprived of those to whom they might naturally have looked for support.

And then, in order to give a wide range to the intercession, we add a supplication for *all who are desolate and oppressed*—all, that is, who are deprived, like the widows and orphans, of their natural helpers, and are liable to become the prey of the unscrupulous, as wanting those who might have guided them by their counsel, and defended them against exaction and wrong.

* Rev. E. Daniel.

That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men.

We beseech Thee, &c.

After contracting itself for a time to the view of special classes who need God's help, the Litany expands itself here again, and sweeps the whole field of those who need God's mercy, praying Him *to have mercy on all men*, with a special thought, perhaps, of those who are ignorant of the Gospel, or have fallen away from the Saviour, in indifference or sin.

Such a supplication is in full accordance both with other petitions in our Prayer Book and with the spirit of Holy Scripture. For we pray, in a similar way, "for all conditions of men," and that God would make known His saving health "unto all nations." And the Third Collect for Good Friday breathes the same spirit throughout. So, in Holy Scripture, S. John describes our Lord as "the True Light, which lighteth every man" (i. 9). And S. Paul expressly directs that prayers be made "for all men," inasmuch as God our Saviour will have "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 1—4; Comp. 2 Pet. iii. 9).

That it may please Thee to forgive our enemies, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

This clause is conceived in the true spirit of Christian love. It is in exact harmony with our Lord's direction, "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you" (S. Matt. v. 44; Comp.

Rom. xii. 14, 20; 1 Pet. iii. 9), and with the example given us by our Lord Himself (S. Luke xxiii. 34), an example followed remarkably by S. Stephen (Acts vii. 60), and S. Paul (1 Cor. iv. 12).

There are three classes mentioned in the clause. First, those who hate us, and are *our enemies* generally, bearing malice and ill-will towards us. Then, secondly, there are those who are our *persecutors*, showing this their enmity by inflicting such injury upon us as they can *in deed*. And it would seem, from the word used, "persecutors," that it is those who hate us, and try to injure us, on account of our religion, that we are more especially to have in view. And, thirdly, there are those who would injure us *by their words*, our *slanderers* inventing or spreading evil reports against us, ruining us by their secret insinuations, and destroying our good name.*

For all these we pray that God would *forgive them* and *turn their hearts*, bestowing thus upon them those two greatest blessings, pardon,—full, free pardon for their past transgressions against

* By slander the vile practiser achieveth the greatest mischief that can be. His words are (as the Psalmist saith of Doeg) "*devouring words*;" "thou lovest all devouring words" (Ps. lii. 4). "A man" (saith the wise man) "that beareth false witness against his neighbour, is a maul, and a sword, and a sharp arrow;" that is, he is a complicated instrument of all mischief. Incurable are the wounds which the slanderer inflicteth; irreparable the damages he causeth; indelible the marks which he leaveth. So extremely opposite is this practice unto the Queen of virtues, Charity.—BARROW, vol. ii. serm. 18.

the law of Christian love,—and the grace of repentance and amendment for the time to come.

And when we think what hard things even Christians are found to say against one another, and how those of one sect or party oppose those who differ from them, we feel that there is only too much need to offer up this supplication still.

That it may please Thee to give and preserve to our use, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

It is to an altogether different subject that the Litany turns now. For we pray of the Saviour in this clause to give His blessing to the earth, that so it may produce its *kindly* or *natural* fruits for the sustenance and enjoyment of man.* The prayer, it has been observed, is specially needed at a time when there is a tendency to forget God's Providence, and think of the course of nature, and fixed laws. It is in accordance with the language frequently employed in the Psalms (see Ps. lxxv. 9—13, civ. 13—15, cxlvii. 14), and with the words of S. Paul, who spoke of God to the people of Lystra as *giving us* "fruitful seasons" (Acts xiv. 17), and to the Corinthian Church, as "giving the

* In Johnson's *Dictionary*, by Todd, the second meaning of the word *kindly* (from *kind*) is given thus:—"natural, fit, proper."

"The earth shall sooner leave her *kindly* skill."

SPENSER, *Fairy Queen*.

In a similar way Tennyson uses the word:—

"Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the *kindly* race of men?"

Tithonus.

increase;" where the literal fact is implied in the figure which S. Paul is using in a spiritual sense (1 Cor. iii. 7).

We ask of God both *to give* us this increase, causing the earth to bring forth her fruits, and also *to preserve* these fruits of the earth from being destroyed by any of those evils to which they are exposed, as mildew, blight, excessive rain, and the like.

And we are reminded that they are given both for the *use* and the *enjoyment* of man. "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving" (1 Tim. iv. 4). And this habitual, grateful remembrance of the Giver will more or less ensure our right use of His gifts. It will lead us to offer to Him the first-fruits of all. It will prevent our abusing them by indolence, or excess, or selfish disregard of the wants of others.

That it may please Thee to give us true Repentance, &c.

We beseech Thee, &c.

We have asked of God that He will give us the things needful for our earthly life. In this last solemn supplication we pray of Him to give us the three things which constitute the chief needs of our spiritual life, repentance, pardon, grace.

First, we implore Him to give us that *true repentance* of which our Prayer Book speaks emphatically in this office, as it does in the other two most generally used, the Communion Service, and the service of Morning and Evening Prayer. For our Church would lovingly warn us that there is a spurious repentance, which consists in

a sorrow for sin, and endeavours to turn from it, *on account of its consequences*. Whereas true repentance, is sorrow over sin, as *a sin against God*, as violating God's holy law, grieving a Father of infinite love, "crucifying the Son of God afresh." And this true repentance, this earnest, sustained effort to turn entirely to God, we cannot attain to of ourselves,—we must ask for it from Christ the Saviour, "whom God hath exalted . . . for to give repentance to Israel," His people, as well as "forgiveness of sins" (Acts v. 31).

We ask thus for the grace of true repentance, which is the condition of our pardon, while it will be deepened as our sense of God's pardoning love in Christ grows more full. And then we go on to pray of God *to forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances*—all, that is, which we have *committed* in wilful violation of His Law; and all which we have *omitted* to do, in sinful neglect of the known will of God; and all which we have done amiss *through ignorance*, especially through that ignorance of things which we might have known, and ought to have known, which arises from our own indifference and want of care.

And then, as a last point, we pray that He will *endue us with the grace of His Holy Spirit*. We must be "filled with the Spirit," in place of the Evil Spirit who has been cast out of our hearts, or we shall be unable really to live a new life to God. "Without Me," our Lord said, without His Holy Spirit, that is, "ye can do nothing" (S. John xv. 5). Whereas, reversely, His grace "is sufficient for us." And "walking

in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16) we shall walk more and more as God would have us walk, along the narrow way, ruling ourselves *according to His Holy Word*, as alone supplying us with the true motives, and hopes, and principles, and rules which should animate and regulate our spiritual life in the world.

Son of God, we beseech Thee to hear us.

*

*

*

O Christ, hear us.

The whole first portion of the Litany closes now with an earnest cry of supplication to the Lord. There are three separate titles under which we call upon Him here.

First, we address Him as the "*Son of God*," in His essential Deity, and Almighty power. For He was indeed "declared to be the Son of God with power," as in many other ways, so, more especially, "by the resurrection from the dead" (Rom. i. 4). And we pray of Him *to hear us*, to hearken to our earnest entreaty, and not turn a deaf ear to our prayers, and "make as though He heard not," which must drive us to despair, though it would be but the just punishment of our sins.

Then, secondly, we twice call upon Him as the *Lamb of God*, prefigured by the Paschal Lamb; as having, in His perfect Humanity, offered Himself up to God for man, so making the one full and sufficient Atonement for sin. And, because this perfect sacrifice is being continually applied to us one by one, therefore we address the Saviour as the Lamb of God who *taketh* away continually the sins of the world, of all every-

where who faithfully turn to Him, and who "ever liveth to make intercession for us" (Heb. vii. 25). We prayed of Him before to "spare us." And therefore we do not repeat here these words, which occur in other Litanies in this place. But, instead, we pray of Him to *have mercy upon us, and to grant us His peace.* Wherein we imitate the example of the humble penitent in the gospel, crying, "God be merciful to me, a sinner" (S. Luke xviii. 13). And we ask of Him, who "is our peace" (Eph. ii. 14), to give us that peace of His ("*Thy* peace") which passeth all understanding, and which He alone can give, and which He promised before His departure to bestow upon His Church (S. John xiv. 27).

And then, thirdly, we call upon Him as *Christ*, the Anointed One, the Messiah promised as the Saviour of the world, the Prophet, the Priest, and the King of His Church. And, viewing Him thus in His united Divine and human natures, anointed as Man with "the Spirit of the Lord" (Is. lxi. 1), the Holy Ghost, who descended upon Him (S. Matt. iii. 16; Comp. Acts x. 38), we look to Him in His fulness of power and love, as able to compassionate our infirmities, as He is able to save to the uttermost. And we say, *O Christ, hear us, accept and answer our humble and earnest prayer.*

CHAP. VII.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. In what way, speaking generally, are the latter Supplications different from those which have been already considered?

2. Explain the force of the words "A heart to love and dread Thee." And show how love and fear respectively induce men to keep God's Commandments.
3. What is meant by "grace," and by "increase of grace," in the next clause?
4. For what purpose do we desire increase of grace? and what are the "fruits of the Spirit?"
5. Explain the prayer for those who have erred and are deceived.
6. How is the spiritual battle of life described in the clause following?
7. Show the connection between the three clauses following this, and give the general purpose of them all.
8. What is the meaning of the prayer that God would have mercy "upon all men"? And what is the warrant for our offering it?
9. Distinguish the enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, for whom we pray in the next clause.
10. What is meant by the "kindly fruits" of the earth? And what is the special value of this prayer now?
11. Explain in detail the last clause.
12. Give the force of the several sentences with which the first half of the Litany concludes.



CHAPTER VIII.

THE CONCLUDING PORTION OF THE LITANY.

Lord, have mercy upon us, &c.
Our Father, &c.

At the meeting point between the first and second portions of the Litany is fitly placed the Lord's Prayer, preceded, as it so commonly is, by

the short threefold address to the three Persons of the Holy Trinity, which is popularly styled "the Lesser Litany,"* and followed by the two sentences in which minister and people unite to beseech God not to deal with them according to (or after) their sins, nor to reward (*i.e.* requite) † them according as their iniquities have deserved. "If Thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it" (Ps. cxxx. 3), is our thought. And we adopt accordingly the words of another Psalm, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, neither rewarded us according to our wickednesses" (Ps. ciii. 10; Comp. Job xi. 6), and turn the Psalmist's words of comfort into a prayer. The Lord's Prayer, without which any Service is held to be imperfect, is very suitably introduced here, as summing up all the prayers, intercessory and personal, for deliverance from evil and for positive blessings, which have gone before, and as the model upon which the fuller and more continuous supplications now to follow are to be framed. It is not necessary to examine the Lord's Prayer in any detail here.‡ It will be enough to remark that, of the two parts of which it is composed, the first half has reference

* This is the only occasion, it has been noted, on which, with us, the people repeat every one of these sentences of the Kyrie after the Minister. Such was the old Sarum rule as to the Kyrie here.—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer.*

† So in Psalm xciv. 2, "Arise, Thou judge of the world, and reward the proud after their deserving."

‡ For an explanation of it, the writer may be allowed to refer to his "Exposition of the Lord's Prayer." Parker, Oxford and London.

to God, the second to man: the same order being observed here as in the case of the Ten Commandments of the old Law. And further, that in the second portion the petitions are all intercessory, including others as well as ourselves; "Give *us* this day." "Forgive *us* our trespasses." "Deliver *us* from evil."

It may make the view of this latter portion of the Litany more clear, if it is regarded as divisible into four main parts. The *first* part consists of the first prayer, beginning "O God, merciful Father," and the sentences following. The *second* part consists of the versicles and responses which follow the Gloria. The *third* part is composed of the prayer, "We humbly beseech Thee, O Father," &c. And the *fourth* part contains the Prayer of S. Chrysostom, and the Benedictory prayer, with which the Litany concludes.

It is observed by Dean Comber that the exact time is not known when this supplicatory portion of the Litany was added; but it is supposed to have been about 600 years after Christ, in the time of Gregory the Great. "Doubtless," he says, "these supplications were first used in a time when the enemies of the Church prevailed; probably when the barbarous nations overran the Empire, and harassed all these parts of the world. For most of these petitions suppose us to be in danger of enemies."

"And truly," he adds, "it is very prudent, if not necessary, in so large an office, to vary the manner of our address as often as conveniently we can, to prevent weariness and

distraction, and to give a new vigour to our affections by a new manner of praying.”

PART I.

Let us pray.

O God, merciful Father, &c.

This prayer is taken very much from a corresponding prayer in the Sarum Offices, which were the result of a revision of then existing forms made by Osmund, Bishop of Salisbury, and Chancellor of England, about 1087 A.D.*

The prayer is preceded by the words, “*Let us pray*,” in order to stir the attention of the people, and remind them of the great work of prayer in which they are engaged. They also mark a transition from those shorter forms, in which the response of the people is more frequently called for, to the longer form in which there is assigned to the minister a more continuous prayer, and during which, therefore, the attention of the people needs to be more sustained.

The prayer itself is composed in four parts. There is first the opening address to God as our *Merciful Father*, respecting whom we adopt the Psalmist’s words, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise” (Ps. li. 17 ;

* The prayer had formed a Collect in the Mass, “*pro tribulatione cordis*.” It is given by Procter, p. 257, in full. There is something pathetically significant, it has been said, in this adoption (1544) in the ordinary Litany of a prayer composed for “cloudy and dark days.” The lesson is obvious—that God is *always* needed as a Comforter.—*Annotated Book of Common Prayer*.

Comp. Joel ii. 13); and Who, we are sure, will not disregard the sorrowful crying to Him of those who are in need.

Then, encouraged by these thoughts, we go on to pray of Him in His mercy, to *assist our prayers* which we offer up to Him in our time of trouble. For the Spirit of God "helpeth our infirmities," and enables us to pour forth earnest, acceptable prayer to God. Whereas we often "know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. viii. 26). And we might of ourselves either fail to pray; or pray without faith in God's goodness and power; or yield to such distraction, and disquietude, and repining, as would sadly impede our prayers.

And then, as a further point, we pray of God, to bring to naught or frustrate, and in *the providence of His goodness*, in that providential care for us which proceeds from His goodness and love, to scatter to the winds those evil plans which *the devil* in his *craft and subtilty*, his subtle craft, or the devices of *men* may be framing for our hurt.

And, lastly, while we ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, and look to obtain God's help for the sake and through the merits of Him, we also declare the great aim and end which is in our view when we pray for this deliverance, namely, that we may, with hearts full of gratitude, and set free from disquieting care, praise and glorify God's Name more earnestly in the congregation, and offer to Him our heartfelt thanks.

O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for Thy Name's sake.

O God, we have heard with our ears, and our fathers have declared unto us, &c.

O Lord, arise, help us, and deliver us for Thine honour.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

(Answer). As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end; Amen.

The responsive Versicles here, "O Lord, arise," &c., do not strictly *complete* the sense of the foregoing prayer, in the manner in which the sentences following the separate clauses in the previous portion of the Litany complete the sense in each case. Rather, they declare the mind's assent to the preceding prayer, while they *carry on* its meaning. And thus they are at once equivalent to "Amen," and also to something more, as adding somewhat to what has been already said in the prayer. They were used with the sentence, "O God, we have heard, &c.," on Rogation Monday, according to the uses of Sarum and York, in the pre-Reformation times. The repetition of the sentence, "O Lord, arise," &c., is a relic, it has been observed, of the old use of Antiphons, to intensify the leading idea of the Psalm, customary at the time.*

The Versicles beginning, "O Lord, arise," &c., may be taken from either of two Psalms. For in Psalm xliv. 23—26, the words occur: "Up, Lord, why sleepest Thou? Awake, and be not absent from us for ever. Arise, and help us; and deliver us for Thy mercy's sake." And

* *Annotated Book of Common Prayer.*

again in Psalm lxxix. 9, there are the words: "Help us, O God, of our salvation, for the glory of Thy name. O deliver us, and be merciful unto our sins, for Thy Name's sake."

They are an earnest cry to God that He will manifest, and put forth into energy, His power and goodness. For that is the force in Scripture of the words, "*Arise*," "*Awake*," and the like, as applied to God. And we pray of Him to *help us*, giving us His aid in the midst of the troubles by which we may be at any time encompassed; and to *deliver us*, so that we may be eventually and finally set free from them by Him in His own good time. And this our request we make, not merely with a view to our own safety and happiness, but, still more, with a primary view to *God's honour* and glory, that we and others "may thank His Name for ever" (Ps. xliv. 8, Kay's Version); while the plea which we offer as the ground of our petition is not any merit of our own, but simply His mercy, His goodness, His love, all that which is summed up as His Name, praying Him thus to help and deliver us *for His Name's sake*.

The sentence which is said by the minister between these Versicles, "O God, we have heard," &c., is taken from the opening of the 44th Psalm, and is regarded by Mr. Jebb as representing in our Litany the Psalmody which entered into the Litany Services of the earlier days of the Church.* The words were full of meaning to the Israelites, who would commemorate in them God's great mercies to His chosen people. But they have

* *Choral Service*, p. 426.

a far fuller meaning still to us, who encourage ourselves in them with the thought of what God has done for man, not only under the old Dispensation, but now, much more, in the new. He who has done such great things for us already, how will He not always help and bless His people who trust in Him? *

This part concludes with the Gloria, said now by all kneeling. For it is here not only an ascription of praise to God, suitable to all circumstances, even those which seem most troubled and dark, † according to these words, "On Thee praise waiteth all hushed, O God" (Ps. lxxv. 1, Kay's vers.), which declare assured faith that God's goodness is ready to shine forth, however great the present darkness. It is also more or less of the nature of a prayer, expressing our desire that His mercies may tend surely to promote the glory of all the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity, as leading not only to our grateful adoration, but also to our faithful obedience and service in heart and life. While

* Not only is every earlier act of Redemption a type and pledge of later deliverances; but, as the Church is one in all ages, she rejoices in contemplating God's wonders of old as part of her own history. Kay on Psalm lxxvi. 6.

† It has been observed that the insertion of the Doxology in the midst of Supplications is in accordance with that mixture of praise with prayer which is so observable in the Book of Psalms (*e.g.* xxii. 22, &c.). It was enjoined to be used in some similar form daily in the offices of the Church from the earliest times; and the very words are set down by Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 190) as the Christian's form of praising God.—Rev. E. J. BOYCE, *the Litany with Explanations*, p. 85.

it is also the expression of an act of Faith in the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity, to whom we look in humble confidence for help.

PART II.

From our enemies defend us, O Christ.

* * * * *

As we do put our trust in Thee.

The short responsive sentences which make up the second part of this portion of the Litany belong mostly to an addition to the Litany for occasional use in time of war. They were introduced into our Litany here in 1544. But it will be observed that the two concluding sentences have the rubrical words "The Versicle," and "The Answer," prefixed. And this is because they were drawn from a different source. For they formed, according to the use of Sarum, part of the *preces* of the Morning Prayer; and are taken from the last verse of the thirty-third Psalm. They occur, it will be noticed, at the conclusion of the Te Deum, in the Daily Service of Morning and Evening Prayer, as well.

The General purpose of all these sentences is that minister and people may lift up their cry earnestly to the Saviour for pardon and for help. We ask of Him to *look upon* our afflictions, and *behold* our sorrows; for with Him to look is to help. And so the father of the possessed child said, "I beseech Thee, look upon my son." We ask Him to *hear us*, to *hear our prayers favourably*. For with Him, to hear is to answer. We beseech Him to *have mercy upon us*, using

the very words with which the blind Bartimæus prevailed with our Lord (S. Mark x. 47, 48; Comp. S. Matt. xv. 22).

And then the particular requests which we make to Him are that He will *defend us from our enemies*, giving now a spiritual meaning as well to words which referred to literal enemies at first; that He will comfort and succour us in *our afflictions* and the *sorrows of our hearts*; and, above all, that He will *forgive the sins of His people*, who implore from Him pardon and peace.

And in all this we address Him as the *Son of David*, who became Very Man of the lineage of David, according to the Flesh, and who thus, as Very Man, can sympathise with the temptations and trials, the afflictions, the sorrows, of men. And again as the *Christ*, the Messiah long promised, who has come to be the Saviour of His people, pardoning for them the guilt, and overcoming the power, of sin. And, still more, as the *Lord Christ*, the Saviour who is the Lord Almighty, as absolute in Power, as He is infinite in Love; so that we can with perfect confidence and resignation say, "So help us, 'as we do put our trust in Thee;'" our perfect reliance on Him being our one ground of claim for help.

PART III.

Let us pray.

We humbly beseech Thee, &c. Amen.

In the former prayer, that beginning with the words "O God, Merciful Father," our thoughts were directed mainly to those evils

which come upon us from without. In this prayer, on the other hand, we think more of our infirmity within; our own weakness, and want of spiritual strength. It is echoed by the words "by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright";* and again, "through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing"† without God's help.

The prayer is formed from two of six Collects which were introduced here into the English Litany by Cranmer, in 1544. And one of these Collects was itself framed in great measure from an ancient Form. The prayer is preceded, like the prayer preceding the short Versicles and Responses, by the words "Let us pray," which remind the worshipper to collect his spirit, and enter earnestly into the petition which the minister is to offer up.

There are three main petitions contained in this prayer. *First*, we beseech God humbly, we implore Him in deep humility, to look with an eye of mercy upon the infirmities or weaknesses which attach to us, and which are partly the causes, and partly the consequences, of our yielding to sin, and drawing down God's punishment upon us. So that we cry, in the language of King David, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak" (Ps. vi. 2).

Then, *secondly*, we go on to pray that He will *for the Glory of His Name*, as the God who is "plenteous in mercy," turn from us, as far as

* Collect for 4th Sunday after Epiphany.

† Collect for 1st Sunday after Trinity.

it may be, *those evils which we most righteously have deserved*; as Ezra said, “Thou, O God, hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve” (Ezra ix. 13).

And, *thirdly*, we pray that no troubles which are, for wise purposes, suffered to fall upon us, may make us despair, or *lead us to trust* in any human aids, or in *anything else than the loving Mercy of God*, however we may use, and should use, every precaution and means on our own part that we can. With which we join the prayer that we may henceforth so serve Him heartily in pureness and holiness of life, as both to show our gratitude for His Mercy, and prevent His needing to send upon us troubles to recall us in the time to come.

And we add, in concluding our prayer, that our *end and aim* in all is *God's honour and glory*; our one *ground of trust* the Mediation and Intercession of our *Mediator and Advocate*, *Jesus Christ our Lord*.

PART IV.

A Prayer of S. Chrysostom.

Almighty God, who hast given us grace, &c.

The Litany now draws to its close, like the Service for Daily Morning and Evening Prayer, with what is commonly called the Prayer of S. Chrysostom. It was placed at the end of the Litany by Cranmer, when the Litany was brought out by itself in 1544, and has retained its position since. The prayer is found in the Liturgy which bears the name of S. Chrysos-

tom in the Eastern Church, as well as in that which bears the name of S. Basil. And hence the name of the "Prayer of S. Chrysostom" is given to this prayer.*

It is addressed, like the earlier portion of the Litany, to our Lord Himself, who is One with the Father, "*Almighty God.*" It expresses our gratitude to Him for having granted us the opportunity of offering up to Him our common, or united, supplications for others and for ourselves. It pleads His gracious promise — "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them" (S. Matt. xviii. 20). It beseeches Him, who knows far better than we do what is really most for our true interest, to fulfil our petitions, and the desires which have prompted them, in such way as He may see to be most expedient for us. And, summing up our desires under two great heads, it leads us to pray to Him that He will give us in this present life a full knowledge of His truth,† and that, in fulfilment of our chief and highest desires, He will give us life everlasting in the world to come.

2 Cor. xiii.

The grace of our Lord, &c.

The Benedictory Prayer forms the actual con-

* "It is not found, however, in the most antient manuscripts of his Liturgy, but in those of S. Basil."—Bp. Forbes, from Palmer, i. 249.

† This seems the strict meaning of the words "knowledge of Thy truth," as they are clearly taken from 1 Tim. ii. 4. They are *χορηγῶν ἡμῖν τὴν ἐπίγνωσιν τῆς ἀληθείας*, in the original Greek.

clusion of the Litany and the Daily Service alike. It is not said by the minister standing, as a blessing. But it is offered by the minister for himself and the people, he and they alike kneeling, and they joining in spirit with him in the prayer.

In it we pray for the blessing of all the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity with an address to Whom the Litany began. And, since all blessings flow forth to men through Jesus Christ our Lord, we first ask for the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the manifestation of His favour by the help, pardon, strength, which He bestows. Then we pray that God the Father may look upon us with love, as His redeemed children in Christ. And last we pray that we may have the Fellowship, or possession in common, of God the Holy Ghost, uniting us more and more to God in Christ, and to one another in Him, guiding and comforting us, convincing us of our faults, sanctifying our hearts, and enabling us to offer earnest prayer.

And all the people pour forth fervently from the heart "Amen," "Be it so, O Lord." May this our prayer, and all the prayers which we have now offered, be accepted and blessed by Thee, to the glory of Thy Name.—And our solemn and beautiful Service of the Litany is at an end. And we pause for a moment to meditate on the thought that, by the love of God the Father for man restored, the blessed Presence of God the Holy Spirit broods with Its consoling and restoring power over the sins and miseries of the world, of the memory of which

our Litany has been full, through the grace of Him whom we have been addressing throughout, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

CHAP. VIII.—QUESTIONS FOR EXAMINATION.

1. Why is the Lord's Prayer introduced into the Litany? And why is it placed in the position which it holds in our Litany?
2. From whence are the two Versicles following the Lord's Prayer taken, and what is their force?
3. Give a short summary of the prayer beginning "O God, Merciful Father." Whence is it derived? And why are the words "Let us pray" prefixed?
4. What is the force of the Sentences and the Gloria which follow the Prayer?
5. From whence are the Sentences following the Gloria derived? And what is the general purport of them?
6. Give the history and the meaning of the prayer which follows.
7. Why is the prayer beginning "Almighty God, &c.," styled the Prayer of S. Chrysostom? And what are the chief points which it contains?
8. What peculiarity is there in the order in which the Three Persons in the Holy Trinity are referred to in the Benedictory Prayer? And what are the blessings which we desire with respect to Each?

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